Trials and Psychiatric Tribulations *Alan Meisel*

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts—May 24, 1975, 50 cents

Moynihan and Scali
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All in the Family
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from Washington
May 24, 1975

A World in Ferment

This is a moment of shock and transition 'round the world, and almost anywhere you look you feel in your bones that things are probably going to get worse before they get better. The Associated Press has dredged up the cheerful fact that this is the first time in 45 years that there is no certified 90 proof conflict going on anywhere on earth that can rank as a war. But the Ford administration thinks that it can fix that. US Air Force planes have sunk Cambodian naval craft after first apparently buzzing them in retaliation for their seizure of the US merchant ship *Mayaguez*. The country is going through a period of anger and mortification after Vietnam and would love to find some gnat that it could smash with a sledge hammer. Meanwhile the Thais have given the US an ultimatum to withdraw marines recently landed without permission. There are circumstances everywhere boding more trouble.

We note, for example, that South Africa has introduced television, after considerable debate on whether this might not put ideas into the uppity natives. They clustered around the first public sets in delight and disbelief. Disbelief in the TV set, or in what they see? South Africa's predominantly black 25 million people are ranked among the upper-crust "developed" countries in the admirable *US and World Development, Agenda for 1975* just issued by the nonprofit Overseas Development Council (Praeger, $4.50).

If South Africa is a *developed* country you wonder about the others: it has a life expectancy of 52 years, 35 percent literacy and the upper 20 percent of the population gets 57.4 of the income and the bottom 20 percent only 1.9 percent. We suspect that introducing a lethal equalizer like television into a disparity like that makes South Africa a traitor to its ethnic class. What do they mean, showing hungry natives the overstocked shops of the "have" countries, and their sleek motor civilization? Don't they know the risk of this in a globe where half of the four billion people are ill-nourished? In most "undeveloped" countries, particularly in the Southern Hemisphere, annual income is below $100 and life expectancy about 30 years—too short to live, and too long to be hungry. There are ructions all 'round the world as the dawning realization of this inequality sends out shock waves. No country is more exposed as a target than the United States; we have only five percent of the global population but we enjoy half of the global income.

Let's turn to India. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi abruptly withdrew at the last minute last week a bill that would have given her government the right to detain certain suspects for two years without trials. The opposition called "dictatorship" and "police rule." India has a per capita gross national product of $110 and the US has $5590; a birthrate double America's; infant mortality 139 per thousand (US, 18) and the division of its income is 42 percent to the top fifth, and eight percent to the lowest. Observers wonder if India can make it as a democracy; yet it found the tax money from its loin-cloth natives to set off a nuclear explosion.

Trouble isn't confined just to dark-skin countries, either. If there's one nation that is a good guy country to most Americans it's Britain. It has detractors of course, but its respect for individual rights, sense of fair play and decency are admirable. But what a mess. It is tied with Italy in having the highest inflation rate in Europe: 21.2 percent a year. To combat inflation you need output but, at the drop of a hat, there's a strike. Trade unions ask wage settlements averaging 32 percent, and get them from the Labour government. The pound sinks to a new low every other day, and the country makes ends meet by borrowing oil money. Will credit hold out? To pass time in this emergency the public argues whether to stay in or to leave the Common Market. These turmoils are being carried on in a genteel British manner, of course, like Robert Morley advertising British Airways, but embarrassed friends wish John Bull would pull his gaiters up. It's like having an alcoholic in the family.

A final look at Asia now. In a series of tremendous dispatches to *The New York Times* Sydney Schanberg told how, as the last foreigners trundled out of Cambodia, the concept dawned on them that the *entire* urban population of Pnompenh, seven million people, was being systematically and ruthlessly marched out to the rice paddies for manual toil and reeducation. "A once-throbbing city became an echo chamber of silent streets lined with abandoned cars and gaping, empty shops. Street lights burned eerily for a population that was no longer there." Now this, among other things, is great writing; it shows once more how print at its best is more powerful than pictures or television. Schanberg tries to be fair; he is compassionate and does not overwrite. But the anguished convulsion of a doctrinaire social shake-up could surpass anything we have imagined in the French or Bolshevik revolutions. It offers arguments for liberals and conservatives to hurl at each other for years. Maybe it wouldn't have happened but for Nixon's 1970 "incursion"; maybe subsequent details will show it exaggerated. The irony is that while US generals wanted to destroy enemy factories and cities—"bomb them back to the stone age"—this is just the direction some hard-line Asiatic fanatics wanted to go. Abandon industrialization; back to agrarianism, more Jeffersonian than Marxist! Never at any time did US generals know what, or whom, they were fighting. Cambodians hustled out eight Russian embassy people, too, Schanberg reports. Moscow has still something to learn about revolution.

Our Cuban policy is a failure, too. Other countries are making profits out of Castro; a terrible insult to our multinationals. It comes down to this, as wise Henry Steele Commager writes in the *Boston Globe*, "We must now recognize that all major problems are global; that none can be solved by any one nation, or even by a small group of nations."

Looking back on this bizarre era perhaps the ultimate inconsistency, as Commager remarks, was to wage war in order to halt Chinese communism and then, after embracing Communist China, to persist in the war. Now Washington says, no recriminations. Maybe. But a little postoperative psychiatric examination might be useful, too.

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A Reckless Arms Sale

The arms-for-sale business may be America's most callous commercial enterprise abroad—a trade we share with the Russians and the French, who would sell just about anything to anybody. Since we have these competitors we are even less restrained because, it is said, scruple only puts us at a competitive disadvantage: the French or the Communists will walk away with the business and the customers get the merchandise in any case.

At the rate of six to seven billion dollars a year, American foreign trade in advanced military equipment is a major prop for our faltering economy. Some of this expense is borne by genuinely poor countries, many virtually without enemies but with leaders who seem to need the roar of supersonic aircraft to drown out the cries of their hungry. More and more, however, it is bloated OPEC treasuries that are customers in the store. Arms sales to them are seen as simultaneously righting our import-export balance and soaking up enough surplus from the parvenu Arabs that they cannot so easily disrupt the world monetary system. But we get our business where we can: from both sides in recent wars—Arabs and Israelis, India and Pakistan, Greece and Turkey. Arming everybody is a tribute to salesmanship and quite an entrepreneurial challenge.

It is an awful business, this indiscriminate commerce in death, not redeemed by the perverse definitions of self-interest it is sometimes said to serve. Of course, sales of arms, as Stanley Karnow pointed out in these pages more than a year ago, do not in themselves trigger wars. To be sure, there *are* situations in which military assistance and arrangements for the purchase of military wares are altogether justified: at best, they deter wars; in extremity, they allow attacked allies to defend themselves. This, at least, is the evidence of the US alliance with Western Europe.

The announcement in Washington of the impending sale of two ground-to-air missile systems to Jordan is, however, a reckless and provocative act, likely to expand and intensify the conflict in the Middle East; and it is in no American interest, however conceived. During the 1973 fighting, King Hussein was able to stay more or less on the sidelines because of his compelling claim that Jordan had no significant air defenses. Were he to open up a third front on the east against the Israelis, he argued, Jordan would be unprotected against

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Israel's inevitable response from the skies. Are we, then, selling these missiles to Jordan to protect it from an unprovoked Israeli attack? It can't be said that Israel has military designs on Jordan's territory. Even in 1967, then Premier Levi Eshkol urgently cabled the Amman government to stay out of the fray; and while routing the Syrians and Egyptians, Israeli troops began to fight on the West Bank only when the Jordanians, persuaded by Nasser that Tel Aviv was aflame, launched a massive thrust against the 1949 armistice lines. In 1970 Israel moved to defend Jordan from Syrian invasion. In 1973 Jerusalem, recognizing Hussein's predicament in the Arab world, tacitly acceded, by not retaliating against Jordanian territory, to his putting a force of 200 tanks into the bitterly raging battle between Israel and Syria.

The possession of "hawk" and "red eye" missile systems would deprive Jordan of its most valid excuse for staying out of future hostilities in the area. This would not only be a license for war, but an invitation to it. The prospect of a three-front, direct military confrontation with Israel decreases the interest of all of the Arab countries in arriving at a reasonable negotiated settlement, and is therefore an inducement to renewed war. A battle involving Jordan and its US missiles obviously would further endanger Israel's security. Given America's deep and continually affirmed commitments to Israel, altering the regional balance of power increases the risk that during resumed fighting an American involvement—direct or indirect—on behalf of Israel might be required. It would be ironic if such an intervention, which the Israelis do not want and which American policy should aim at avoiding, would be precipitated by American arms sales to Israel's adversaries.

One knows in advance the retort of the armaments salesmen and their political adherents: "If we don't sell it to them, the Russians will." It is an old saw, but in this case it is not persuasive. King Hussein has been very cautious about his entanglements and he has reason to be more so now. He knows that Russian equipment brings Russian advisers, officers, troops, political influence, espionage. If the Egyptians found the Soviet presence onerous, how much more so would it be in his kingdom? And what about the Russian connection to his enemies: the Syrian Ba'ath and the Palestine Liberation Organization, whose revanche is aimed as much at his throne as it is at the Israelis? And will the Russians, for their part, be all that eager to risk the disaffection of Damascus and the PLO in a military enterprise of most uncertain political consequence, with a monarch whose deepest ties are to the English and then to the Americans?

In any case the recent transaction was accomplished with the usual diplomatic sleight-of-hand: first leaked, then grudgingly acknowledged, finally announced—but not with much grace. It surprised careful observers in Washington. Basically the project seemed quite without merit or discernible political purpose; and several important Pentagon figures put it off as some arcane scheme of Dr. Kissinger's State Department. One aide to Defense Secretary Schlesinger said, "it is another of Kissinger's crude, doomed and ultimately very dangerous efforts to put pressure on Israel." The administration had one other reason to wish that the transaction not be noticed in public: it had said that pending the major reassessment of American policy in the Middle East, no new decisions on arms to the area would be made. So the State Department spokesman improvised that the Jordanian deal had been a concluded a long time ago. But Israelis had *also* had an as yet unconsummated deal—which everyone knew about—dating at least as far back as the Jordanian missile purchase is now said to have occurred. Israel was to purchase Lance ground-to-ground missiles, for which *Aviation Week* reported Israeli personnel already in training, as well as a number of F-15 fighter planes. (There is some disagreement in Washington as to whether an arrangement for the sale of new laser bombs had also been concluded.) These sales, however, were suspended after the collapse of the Kissinger talks, and various technical difficulties suddenly impeded delivery to Israel of routine items.

It is not simply the differences in the treatment of Jordan and Israel that embarrass the administration. The administration also knows that Congress is restive about the suspension of arms to Israel and that it would not have approved, were it an ordinary legislative matter, the sale of missiles of any sort to Jordan. This sale throws up more obstacles to peace in the Middle East, and it seems so mindless, that Congress should make itself heard, although it has not routinely exercised oversight on arms sales. The rationale proferred at Foggy Bottom that missiles for Jordan will be paid for with very attractive Saudi petrodollars is unconvincing.

History Lessons

Surprising as it may seem, President Idi Amin Dada of Uganda and Alabama's Gov. George Wallace share a common view of history. Amin disclosed recently that he was disappointed to find during a trip to Germany that Berlin lacked a memorial to Hitler. So he intends to erect a statue of Hitler in the Ugandan province of Kizegi, where German and British troops fought one another during World War II. Wallace, in one of his rare foreign policy pronouncements, similarly told a group of foreign correspondents visiting his state that the US made a mistake in fighting Germany and Japan. "We were fighting the wrong people maybe in World War II," he said to the journalists, specifying to a Japanese reporter in the group that "I wish we'd been on the same side."

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Gunboat Diplomacy

President Ford's daring and successful operation to rescue the American seamen held by the Cambodian Communists was obviously staged in order to rescue US honor in the wake of the Indochina debacle. And as such it was Mr. Ford's way of demonstrating to Americans and to the world, as Richard Nixon sought to do when he invaded Cambodia five years ago, that the US is not a "pitiful helpless giant."

Although it has won the President a certain amount of immediate acclaim, the tactic may backfire against his own interests in the long run. In the first place the President's failure to consult adequately with congressional leaders before initiating the Cambodian raid could ultimately lower his credit on Capitol Hill despite the fact that in the first flush of victory, few members of the legislature are openly critical of his action. Many congressmen have been left with the feeling that, despite their recent moves to curb executive authority to exercise force, they have no real voice.

Throwing the Blue Book at Haig

The first books on the Nixon impeachment and resignation already are beginning to flood the stores but the office of the Watergate special prosecution force has yet to close down *its* investigation of White House activities in the months that preceded Mr. Nixon's August 9, 1974 departure from Washington. In fact one of these days Gen. Alexander Haig, President Nixon's chief of staff during those hectic times and now NATO supreme commander, is expected to be called before a grand jury in Washington to explain his role in putting together "the blue book"—the misleading, edited transcripts of taped White House conversations that were released with great fanfare by Mr. Nixon in a nationally televised speech on April 30, 1974. The Watergate prosecutors are studying whether events surrounding preparation of "the blue book" may have violated federal law.

To understand the current inquiry one needs to reconstruct what was going on 14 months ago. The House Judiciary Committee was in its closed session phase and had subpoenaed 42 White House taped phone calls and conversations. Special Watergate Prosecutor Leon Jaworski had subpoenaed 64 tapes that he wanted to use in the then pending Watergate cover-up trial. The House committee was growing restive about its demands that had gone unanswered for almost two months and the Jaworski subpoena called for production of tapes in Judge Sirica's court by May 2. In an attempt to satisfy both subpoenas, the White House devised "the blue book," a compilation of some 46 carefully edited taped conversations—some sought by the House committee, some by Jaworski, and a few selected by the White House. Who did the selecting and who did the editing are among the items the special prosecutor is now trying to discover.

In his address to the nation Mr. Nixon said the whole Watergate story was told in the edited tapes. James St. Clair, special counsel to the then President, wrote an introduction to "the blue book" in which he explained, on Mr. Nixon's behalf, that the released transcripts "represent the best efforts accurately to transcribe the material contained on the recorded tapes." He added that "the material not relating to the President's conduct has been omitted, except where the inclusion is relevant and material has bearing on the President's conduct."

One focus of the prosecutor's current "blue book" investigation is whether that St. Clair statement, and those of the President, were intentionally misleading. The released tapes contained far from the whole Watergate story. The June 23, 1972 tape, which recorded Mr. Nixon and H.R. Haldeman discussing a phase of the cover-up just seven days after the Watergate break-in, had been subpoenaed by Jaworski but was not included among those released. Furthermore many of the transcripts of tapes that *were* included had been carefully edited to eliminate passages damaging to Mr. Nixon's impeachment case.

For example Mr. Nixon and his lawyers maintained the former President never proposed clemency for the Watergate defendants. One subpoenaed tape was an April 14, 1973 conversation between Mr. Nixon and his then chief aides, John Ehrlichman and Haldeman. The full tape disclosed that Mr. Nixon said, ". . . and before I leave office and they'll [the Watergate burglars] get off. You get them full pardons. That's what they have John." And Ehrlichman answers "Right." This does not satisfy Mr. Nixon. He goes on to ask, "Do you agree?" To which Ehrlichman replies, "Yep, I sure do." That exchange was not in the released transcript. In its place was the notation: "material unrelated to presidential actions."

The House Judiciary Committee and the special prosecutor's office have come up with dozens of such instances. One purpose of the present grand jury investigation is to determine whether that editing was designed to interfere with either the impeachment subpoena or that of the grand jury. In a background session for reporters at the time of the "blue book" release, lawyer St. Clair described the edited transcripts as Mr. Nixon's "work product." How it was done, however, was never disclosed. Adding to the mystery is the apparent destruction of the original transcripts from which the edited versions were drawn. In a court appearance just prior to Mr. Nixon's August 9, 1974

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resignation, St. Clair disclosed to Judge Sirica that those notes and papers had been destroyed.

In addition to Haig, other former White House aides expected to appear before the grand jury included J. Fred Buzhardt, the lawyer who most directly dealt with the tapes, and several junior lawyers who put together transcripts.

The final, definitive history of Watergate is still to be written. The current special prosecutor, Henry Ruth, wants to close down his operation with as complete a final report as possible.

Walter Pincus

White House Watch

Moynihan and Scali

Two minor mysteries of the Nixon administration are why Daniel Patrick Moynihan twice dallied with the thought of being US ambassador to the United Nations and why President Nixon gave that job to John A. Scali in December 1972. Now President Ford has asked Pat Moynihan to replace Ambassador Scali at the UN and the resultant hassle provides one of those stories that don't really matter very much but tell a lot about how life can be at the upper levels of government.

Moynihan was one of the stars of the first years of the Nixon presidency, the years that promised so much and proved to be prelude to the Watergate tragedy. He was a Democrat, a certified liberal, a specialist in urban affairs who was also the holder of a doctorate in international relations, a presidential assistant and counsellor who brought a touch of wit and elegance to a rather drab administration. In November of 1970, after nearly two years at the White House, he was ready to quit, partly because the maximum leave normally granted to tenured Harvard professors was running out and partly because, without foreseeing Watergate, he perceived a hardening of attitudes and a narrowing of the circle around the President—in preparation, he then supposed, for the 1972 reelection campaign. Mr. Nixon suddenly offered him the UN ambassadorship and Moynihan jumped at it.

Why he should have wanted the post was a mystery at the time and still is, the UN ambassadorship being by custom, circumstance and law no job for a person of Pat Moynihan's vigor and independence. The 1945 law that authorized and still governs US participation in the United Nations says that the senior ambassador and the four other "representatives" who serve with him "shall, *at all times,* act in accordance with the instructions of the President, transmitted by the Secretary of State." That's true of all ambassadorships, of course, but the UN ambassadorship is the only one that is specifically and particularly restricted by law. With less than his usual good sense, Moynihan brushed that consideration aside at the time and is again brushing it aside. An embarrassing accident saved him from the thralldom of the UN post in 1970. A Harvard colleague heard about the prospective appointment and blabbed to a Boston newspaper before incumbent Ambassador Charles Yost, a respected career diplomat, had been told that he was to be replaced. Rather than be party to such a rudeness, Moynihan asked Mr. Nixon to nominate someone else. Former Congressman George Bush, now chief of the US mission in Peking, got the place. Moynihan returned to Harvard, served as a part-time member of the American delegation to the UN General Assembly in 1971, and in December 1972 was offered his choice of two ambassadorships—to the UN and to India. He chose India and put in two unhappy and frustrating years there. He had just returned once more to Harvard and had joined the faculty of the university's school of government when President Ford offered him the UN ambassadorship. Moynihan requested and, against all rule and precedent, was granted a third two-year leave from Harvard. An additional and hitherto unreported reason for wondering why he'd take the job—he insists that he didn't seek or want it—is the fact, known to him, that he was Mr. Ford's second choice. The President first offered the post to one of his cronies and unofficial advisers, former Governor William Scranton of Pennsylvania, and Scranton declined it.

John Scali is a sometime wire service and broadcast reporter, war correspondent and specialist in diplomatic news who became a staff consultant to President Nixon in April 1971. The theory was that he'd backstop Henry Kissinger in briefing journalists, usually on a background basis, on matters having to do with foreign policy. Scali soon came to detest Kissinger and Kissinger held Scali in utter contempt. Nobody has satisfactorily explained to this day why President Nixon chose Scali in December 1972 to be the chief US ambassador to the UN and why Kissinger tolerated the appointment. The choice astonished Scali and everyone who knew him. He had been a first-rate journalist, he was better versed in foreign affairs than most political appointees to ambassadorships. But for reasons having partly to do with his rather acerbic personality and free-wheeling life-style, John Scali just wasn't anybody's model of a top-level ambassador. A Nixon assistant who was asked what he thought of appointing Scali recalls that he replied: "Mr. President, I understand that the US ambassador to the UN is provided with a splendid apartment in the Waldorf Towers. I also understand that the ambassador has a big, black, chauffeured limousine. I predict that when John Scali gets out of that limousine and takes the elevator up to that apartment, he will enjoy it and do it in style. He will be a credit to the United States." Scali did and was. He

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proceeded to do a far better job than most people who knew him expected him to do. Even Henry Kissinger, who wouldn't ask anyone who knows the two of them to believe that Scali is among his favorite human beings, says for quotation that "John Scali has been one of our more effective UN ambassadors." Scali considers, and people at the State Department generally share the opinion, that he attained the peak of his performance last December 6 with a speech in which he warned the General Assembly majority of small and "third world" nations that many of their recent votes and decisions had "deeply disturbed" the American people and Congress and that as a result US support for the United Nations "is eroding." Scali thought he was riding high when the President summoned him to Washington on April 15, thanked him for doing a good job, and told him that he was being replaced.

Scali concluded and remains bitterly convinced that Henry Kissinger had finally done him in. He is equally convinced, and confides to friends with equal bitterness, that Moynihan wanted the job, maneuvered to get it and, in a reversal of the 1970 news leak, tipped *Newsweek* to the fact that he'd been offered the appointment. A widely acclaimed essay by Moynihan in the March issue of *Commentary*, taking somewhat the same line on American problems with and attitudes toward the UN that Scali had taken in his December 6 speech, without crediting Scali with being there first, compounded Scali's hurt and anger. Stories of Scali's reaction inevitably got back to Moynihan and, so the latter's friends understood, made him wonder whether he really should take the job. If the doubts were genuine, it was passing strange that they had not been conveyed to Ford assistants as late as May 14.

Much inquiry into the background of Scali's displacement and the choice of Moynihan suggests that Scali is wrong on every count, including his suspicion that Moynihan leaked the story in order to speed up the actual nomination. It appears that Moynihan talked about the offer in Cambridge and Boston just as he had in 1970 and that somebody reported the talk to *Newsweek*. The key to the decison to replace Scali is that the UN ambassadorship has cabinet status. Mr. Ford's determination to transform the Nixon cabinet into a Ford cabinet firmed up last October and it was then that he instructed his personnel staff to begin looking around for a new UN ambassador. After the President offered the post to William Scranton and Scranton said no thanks, Kissinger remarked rather casually during a discussion with Mr. Ford that Pat Moynihan might be available. Many weeks later, after the *Commentary* article had focused much attention upon Moynihan, the President offered him the post. Moynihan demurred, fretted, told some of his closest friends that there were personal and family reasons why he probably shouldn't take the job, and finally said he would take it. When he was asked on the record the other day why he had accepted it, he answered: "Because the President asked me to, that's all. I was asked, and that's the only operable explanation."

You can't know Pat Moynihan without knowing that he does have a profound sense of duty to his country and of obligation to Presidents. He displayed it during his time with Richard Nixon and it is thoroughly believable that he felt and succumbed to it when President Ford invoked it.

John Osborne

No Job, No Insurance

Sick and Out of Work

Washington creates floods of statistics and most of them are ignored or rapidly forgotten. One recent set was almost entirely skipped by the press—as well as the administration—but made a considerable impact on Capitol Hill. It consisted of a Bureau of Labor Statistics study showing, not surprisingly but rather definitively, that "when workers lose their jobs they also usually lose health insurance protection for themselves and their families, either immediately or within a month."

The bureau surveyed a hefty 2.8 million workers with health benefit plans tied to employment. Three out of five, the bureau found, were enrolled in plans that provided coverage only until the end of the period for which the last premium was paid. That usually meant the end of the month in which the layoff occurred. To put it more bluntly, depending on the particular day of the month on which the dismissal became effective, the worker lost his health-hospital insurance when he took his lunch box and went home or a few days later or, at the very best, within a month.

The remaining two out of five in the survey were luckier and could expect longer coverage after job dismissal, but the pattern varied. Some could expect benefits for a couple of months, some for three months or more. A small percentage had plans offering health coverage as long as supplemental unemployment compensation was being paid. It all boiled down to some sad figures—60 percent of those insured Americans losing their jobs would also lose health coverage within 30 days or less, another 20 percent within 90 days and 10 percent within 150 days.

It is extremely difficult to determine just how many of the 8.2 million recession unemployed have suddenly lost all insurance defenses against equally sudden illness. This nation has a jumble of health plans, each with its own rules. There can be special circumstances—a husband losing a job may have a working wife with health insurance covering the family, but then again he might not.

A Library of Congress study, however, estimated

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that 80 percent of those laid off in 1974 lost all health coverage. With unemployment now hovering at 8.9 percent and the average loss of work time on the increase, the experts figure that at least five million workers, blue- and white-collar alike, accustomed to insurance are now unprotected. Add the members of their families and the number of the newly vulnerable becomes an impressive, almost frightening, figure.

It also seems clear that few of the newly unemployed had ever thought, in the days when jobs were plentiful, to add a private health plan to their employment-based insurance. Over the years, apparently, they had been lulled into a false sense of security—or else lacked the funds to buy additional insurance. As it is many workers are not only frightened but surprised by the sudden end of coverage.

As for taking out private insurance now, the obvious problem is economic. The average unemployment compensation check is $65 a week, while health insurance for an average family on a nongroup plan basis runs from $50 to $90 a month. Spot checks show that most of the newly unemployed are using their diminished incomes to pay for groceries and mortgages, not health insurance.

The new flood of unemployment has, however, had other results. In Detroit, where some—but not all—UAW workers have valid health insurance as long as their supplemental unemployment benefits continue, the hospitals have recently had a rush of business. It would seem that some of the newly unemployed, fearful of the day when their medical insurance will run out, and having nothing better to do but sit around and wait for the plants to reopen, figure what-the-hell, they might as well have that long-delayed "elective surgery" performed.

But there is a growing fear of the opposite effect—that increasing numbers of unemployed, deprived of health insurance, will delay and delay again all but urgent treatment, whatever the eventual physical and/or psychological impact. It's a matter of simple arithmetic; an average week in the hospital these days costs $1000.

Hospitals and physicians report a new slowness in paying bills. Charity cases have risen. Hospital emergency rooms, the new GP of the urban poor, are more crowded than ever. Bad debts to hospitals and presumably to doctors have risen. Reliable data are not available, but the experts expect the process to snowball. The AFL-CIO has urged its locals to get together with county medical societies to see if some free medical services cannot be arranged for the duration of the emergency.

The administration, with its sit-tight social policy, has had no ideas as to what to do about the new problem. But as unemployment increased, so did pressures for congressional action. Recessions apparently make strange bedfellows—the cries for action have come from organized labor, organized medicine and, to a lesser degree, from the health insurance industry. And bills to meet the need have begun forming in congressional committees.

Unfortunately, before one can understand and evaluate it, one must know something about the crazy-quilt nature of American medical economics. The aged are protected, whether adequately or not, by Medicare. Some if not all of the poor are covered by Medicaid, though this involves the humiliation of a means test. The crutch of the employed is the group health insurance business, by now a huge, $30-billion-a-year business, but it covers only some 70 percent of the normal work force. (Seasonal workers, young workers, those in service industries and some other trades often have little coverage or none. New workers often must wait for months before they are covered by job-based policies.) Group insurance varies from virtually full coverage to the skimpiest protection with a mad variety of plans in between.

In face of all this Congress has been wrestling with three different basic approaches. All sought to deal with an emergency; all would limit help to those receiving unemployment compensation. Sen. Bentsen and Rep. Corman proposed to enroll the jobless in Part A of Medicare—hospital insurance—and to foot the bill out of general revenue. Sen. Kennedy has drafted a bill to use general revenues to pay the old health premiums of the jobless. Rep. Rostenkowski, in the most complex approach, is sponsoring a two-part bill that would temporarily pay the claims—not the premiums—of the jobless out of a trust fund financed by a one percent tax on premiums and would entice employers to reenroll their ex-workers in existing health policies by withdrawing tax reductions on premium payments if they do not. (The House has been offered an alternative, sponsored by Rep. Rogers, which would give Medicaid benefits to unemployed persons who never did have insurance, but this plan would be strictly limited to one year.)

Each approach has its imperfections. The Bentsen-Corman bill would not cover doctors' bills—Part B of Medicare—and would shake and change the system temporarily, giving some workers better protection than they had at work, others poorer protection, and eliminating any role for the health insurance industry. The bill, to no one's surprise, has failed to catch fire and indeed Bentsen is now supporting the Rostenkowski concept.

The Kennedy bill would be financed out of general revenues and therefore would face the danger of a presidential veto. The Rostenkowski bill, while seeking to avoid both a treasury drain and a veto, would increase insurance premiums and almost inevitably employers would feed inflation by passing that burden on to the consumer. More important, both bills would cover only a portion of the unemployed—those

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receiving jobless compensation and those who had health insurance before they were thrown out of work. The two provisions would eliminate nearly two million of the currently unemployed.

The two bills would also perpetuate inequity. Each would restore the benefits the jobless had when they worked, whether those benefits were sweeping or niggardly, nothing else. Those fighting for emergency legislation argue that in a crisis one searches for practical steps, not for perfection on the one hand or paralysis on the other.

The administration has reacted to all this predictably. HEW Secretary Caspar Weinberger used the same words in a series of Capitol Hill appearances: "I regret the necessity of being totally negative." He used a variety of arguments—that such a program would be costly, impose a heavy bureaucratic burden, not cover all those in need, unfairly finance one man's inadequate health insurance and another's "rich" benefit package, impose an unfair burden on the uninsured working poor. Anyway, Weinberger noted, the jobless would again be without health insurance when their unemployment benefits ran out. The best he could offer was the hope that maybe next year the administration would be able to push for that old dream, national health insurance. In the meantime there was nothing to be done beyond trying to get the economy back to the point where the unemployed could be absorbed.

At the same time Weinberger figures that up to eight million more individuals will face unemployment sometime during the year. UAW President Leonard Woodcock estimates tht 20 to 25 million Americans will be jobless at one time or another during 1975. Whichever figure is correct, the pressure for action is built in; and the strange labor-medicine-health insurance alliance can be expected to increase the pressures. Some congressmen worry about the inequities involved, others about the financial impact. But political reality indicates that a bill that succeeds in reaching the floor has a fighting chance of passage.

Ironies remain. The legislative process limps, even during emergencies, and meantime more people end up without health insurance. Even if, in the end, a bill is passed, those unfortunate enough to exhaust their unemployment compensation rights would have to rely on themselves or, if they can qualify, fall back on Medicaid and its welfare stigma. The best and the worst in health plans would be perpetuated by federal law.

But these are the inevitable problems of a country that for years has quixotically postponed action on national health. As Leonard Woodcock has pointed out, his members in Detroit sink or swim while a few miles away in Ontario every jobless worker has prepaid coverage for the first three months of layoff and then pays $22 a month for continued family coverage until he finds work again. If there is any bright aspect to the situation, it is that the recession has increased awareness—at least among the unemployed, their friends and relatives and those threatened by unemployment—of the benefits of a national health insurance program for the only major industrial nation without one.

Alvin Rosenfeld

Mr. Rosenfeld is a former NBC foreign correspondent now working out of Washington.

Cracks in the Third World

Arabs vs. Africans

Accra, Ghana

A few weeks ago, Accra's most prominent political writer published an article in the *Ghanaian Times*, a government-owned newspaper, complaining that black Africa was, under the mantle of African solidarity, being treated pretty shabbily by its Arab neighbors at the northern end of the continent. He suggested that the Organization for African Unity (OAU) had, in effect, been reduced to an instrument serving Arab political ends. The article stated what one hears rather frequently on an unofficial level from black African journalists, civil servants, professors and others with access to information. The official line in the foreign ministries proclaims Third World harmony. Over bottles of beer at dusk, the attitude shifts to indignation and resentment.

Most recently the black African press has been focusing on the issue of Arab support for the Eritrean rebel forces, which happen to be Moslem. Black Africa, while mystified by the practices of the military junta that overthrew Haile Selassie, nonetheless retains a special attachment to Ethiopia. Not only was it the only black African country to inflict a major military defeat on a European power during the colonial era, but it succeeded in remaining independent during most of those years when the rest of the continent was under foreign domination. In homage to this achievement, Ethiopia has been acknowledged a kind of preeminence in the movement for a unified Africa and, Selassie's fall notwithstanding, Addis Ababa remains the headquarters of the OAU. Tampering with Ethiopia's integrity, then, is a bit like attacking the mother church.

But quite apart from sentiment, there is a practical consideration. Every black African country is, to one degree or another, threatened by the centrifugal forces of tribalism. "Balkanization" is a word pronounced with surprising frequency, and considerable trepidation, in black African capitals. The "nation" is a European concept, imposed upon a tribal culture, but in nations the governments and elites of Africa have acquired a vested interest that they mean to protect.

Nigeria and Zaire (then the Congo) have already suffered through terrible tribal wars to preserve their

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nationhood. Interestingly, the explanation for the absence since independence of frontier disputes between nations whose boundaries were arbitrarily fixed by European powers in an earlier age is that no government is willing to risk stirring tribal irredentism in claiming another government's land. So it is in contemplating their own inherent instability that black African leaders judge harshly the flow of Arab money and arms, some of it coming from within Africa itself, to the Eritrean rebels.

But more important, of course, the black Africans feel severely abused by the profit taken by the Arab countries, much of it at their expense, from the rise in oil prices. With some wry bemusement they note the Arab effort to make OPEC into a Third World cause. To black African complaints of gouging, the oil producers have replied with denunciations of colonial exploitation, and advice to form raw material cartels of their own, as if Ghanaian cocoa or Tanzanian cashews worry multinational executives or commodity traders in Paris and New York. As the black Africans point out, what the Arabs have not extended is concessionary prices, which they desperately want. Of the $97 billion surplus earned last year, the OPEC countries recently pledged a grant of $200 million to the OAU, for distribution to its most hard-pressed members. Very little of this money, however, has actually been delivered.

Black Africa's desperation presents a serious dilemma for Nigeria, the only major oil producer south of the Sahara. So far as one can tell, Nigeria would sincerely like to cut prices for its black African neighbors. In order to seal off possible "leaks" to the industrial world, it presented them with a plan to sell crude at concessionary terms to African countries that had refining capacity but exported no petroleum products. Such conditions were absurd, since countries like Ghana and Tanzania that have their own refineries have long-standing arrangements to ship some of their products to their neighbors in the interior. Since the obstacles might have been compromised, however, OPEC raised strong objections to the entire plan, the chief hatchet-wielder being Algeria, itself a member of the OAU. At last glance, the Nigerians seemed to prefer the economic advantages of OPEC to the fraternal gratitude of black Africa, and the proposal was dying in quibbles.

At the most recent of the periodic meetings of foreign ministers of the OAU, the rift came out into the open, and an effort was made to paper it over by the appointment of a new committee on Afro-Arab relations. Its chairman, Foreign Minister John Malecela of Tanzania, denies vigorously that the problems are serious. In an interview, he would allow only the faintest hint of criticism in saying, "Whether we like it or not, more than half the oil in the world is found in the Arab countries. Therefore, we in Africa want to cooperate with these Arabs so that we can use these funds, together with the resources in Africa, to develop our countries. We hope this committee will be finding ways and means of furthering economic and other forms of cooperation between the Arab and African countries." Even in Malecela's own ministry in Dar es Salaam, however, the comment that could be elicited on an off-the-record basis indicated little optimism that such cooperation could be achieved.

The issue on which the black Africans consider themselves taken, of course, is Israel. Throughout the years from the beginning of African independence until late 1973, the Israelis maintained a warm and special relationship with black Africa. Israelis helped Ghana set up its navy, the Ivory Coast build its tourist hotels, Tanzania establish its collective villages. Drawing upon its own experience with inhospitable soil, Israelis worked in agricultural programs in almost every black African country, and hundreds of black Africans were brought to Israel to be trained in technology and management. Unlike the great industrial powers, Israel had neither a history of African colonialism nor the economic-military might to be threatening. The Africans were comfortable with the Israelis, who seemed to be asking little in return besides friendship.

It is that friendship which the black Africans repudiated under increasingly intense Arab political pressure and, finally, the imposition of the oil embargo during the Yom Kippur war. One by one, every black African country broke diplomatic relations with Israel. In the United Nations and in other forums, the black Africans have faithfully followed the Arabs' anti-Israeli line—while pointing out, along with their other grievances, that the Arabs have shown scarcely any interest in their own struggles against white rule in the south of Africa. Now one hears a refrain of regret throughout the black capitals, and perhaps the signs of a guilty conscience. Over and over again one hears in the foreign ministries that black Africa would seize upon the slightest pretext in Middle East negotiations to undo past wrongs and restore the old relationship, whatever the Arabs might say about it.

Indeed, a conclusion one draws from weeks of talking in black Africa is of an increasing recognition that the basic notion of a solidarity that encompasses black and Arab Africa—if not the Third World itself—is fictitious. What the implications of this trend may be for the United States are hard to predict, especially if thoughtless mistakes like the Nathaniel Davis brouhaha recur endlessly to offend African sensibilities. But south of the Sahara, one can sense that the days of the so-called Afro-Asian bloc as a power in global diplomacy are numbered. There is simply not sufficient common interest between its various segments to keep it together.

Milton Viorst

Mr. Viorst frequently writes on foreign and domestic politics from Washington, DC.

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Speaking of Seized Ships

The Tuna War

There is a saying in Ecuador: "If your cat runs into your neighbor's house—ask his permission before retrieving it."

This nugget of folk wisdom is being cited by Ecuadorian diplomats these days for the big, sleek American tuna boats from southern California swarmed down into Ecuador's coastal waters early in the New Year netting rich hauls of yellow fin or skipjack tuna. The Ecuadorians, as they have in recent years, seized and fined the Americans heavily—and, for the first time, began confiscating valuable catches.

Tempers on both sides have been high ever since, and further trouble now looms. The second half of the annual tuna season opened April 13 after a month's interval imposed by the multi-nation Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission. If the tuna are still off Ecuador more clashes can be predicted. If they have moved south off Peru, the conflict merely widens, for in this Peru and Ecuador—historic enemies—are united against American "economic exploitation."

The Ecuadorians, together with Peru and Chile, extended their "sovereignty" 200 miles out into the Pacific in 1952 to preserve their valuable offshore fishing from Russian, Japanese, Norwegian and other foreign encroachments. Most—but not all—American tuna skippers have refused to recognize Ecuador's right to issue fishing licenses averaging between $20,000 and $35,000 per boat.

Since 1952 Ecuador has seized 127 American tuna boats and has imposed various fines and fees totalling $5.7 million. Last autumn, anticipating a new round of wrangling with the Americans after the January 1 start of the tuna season, they stiffened their laws. Between January 25 and February 1, this year, they seized, among other vessels, seven American tuna boats—some of them 80 to 100 miles out to sea—and imposed various sanctions totalling $4 million, to say nothing of loss of valuable fishing time.

"Fishing licenses would have cost these seven boats $231,000," said one Ecuadorian source, "but because they still refuse to recognize our laws the cost to the American taxpayer will be more than $4 million."

The American taxpayer? Precisely. The tuna boat owners, organized into the American Tunaboat Association of San Diego, California have powerful friends in California's congressional delegation. Thanks to a bit of legislative legerdemain known as the Fishermen's Protective Act, 1967, all fees, fines and estimated losses in fishing time incurred by American fishing boats apprehended on the "high seas" are reimbursed by the US Treasury out of tax funds.

With virtually all costs paid by the Treasury and with the lure of another $25 million fishing season, the incentives for ignoring Ecuador's protests are obvious. August Felando, the feisty secretary-general of the ATA, called on President Ford and on Congress recently to send destroyer-escorts in the future and to impose various new sanctions on Ecuador. The State Department and the Ecuadorian government have been quietly cooperating to muffle the dispute. Neither wants a repetition of the 1971 "headline" war that virtually ruptured relations.

Felando and the tuna men claim that the State Department has long backed their refusal to buy Ecuadorian fishing licenses. State Department sources confirm, in fact, that in 1966 Eugene V. Rostow, then Under Secretary for Political Affairs, advised a visiting American tuna delegation to ignore Ecuador's protests and to count on destroyers if they proved necessary. After nine years of mounting acrimony this policy of muscular bluff is apparently headed for the ash can.

The issue came to a head March 6 when a fracas between 17 crewmen of the California tuna boat Neptune (a $3 million monster of 950 tons with its own spotter aircraft and nets worth $250,000 apiece) and Ecuadorian naval guards flared up in the port of Salinas. The facts are hard to glean but apparently some US crewmen, bored and irritated after 27 days waiting in port, disarmed and then forced ashore their Ecuadorian guards—and then refused even to allow representatives of the US embassy back aboard.

Eventually the Ecuadorians marched the entire crew off to jail from which they were released only at the personal plea of John DeWitt, the US Consul General at nearby Guayaquil. In time the Neptune, like other seized American boats, was allowed to depart but not until more fines had been imposed and US-Ecuadorian relations had been further strained.

The tuna war between the US and Ecuador (population seven million) might be laughed off were it not for the broader implications. Ecuador's major exports were bananas and Panama hats until 1972 when new oil discoveries brought the tiny Andean country an annual income upwards of $500 million. In 1973, Ecuador became (after Venezuela) the second Latin American member of OPEC, and both countries have recently been bitterly protesting alleged discrimination in the latest US Trade Act. Hemisphere sympathy resulted in cancelling the Foreign Ministers Conference that Henry Kissinger was planning to attend last month.

Ecuador claims international support. Noting that in 1947 President Truman unilaterally extended US jurisdiction, if not sovereignty, over the mineral-rich continental shelf, which extends up to 200 miles into the Atlantic, Ecuador points out that nine Latin and 50 other nations have extended their off-shore jurisdiction to preserve mineral or fishing resources.

As a matter of fact within the United States pressures are rising in New England and on the Pacific coast for a US 200 mile zone to protect American fishing interests from the increasing depredations of

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ultra-modern Russian, Japanese and other foreign fleets. Not long ago, in fact, the US seized an Italian fishing ship off Nantucket, imposed a six-figure fine and threatened its master with a year in prison for an illegal catch of 30 pounds of lobster.

To get the tuna war off its collision course the State Department has recently proposed formation of a "regional association" comprising hemisphere nations with Pacific fishing interests: Ecuador, its partners Peru and Chile, the United States, Canada, Mexico, and five Central American states and Panama. Each would respect the other's right to a 200 mile "resource conservation" zone.

The formula, if accepted, would dodge the thorny issue of recognizing Ecuador's (or any country's) claim to 200-mile "sovereignty—a claim stoutly resisted by the Pentagon and its singular ally the Kremlin. Both are in lock-step over this issue for both fear that proliferating claims around the world might impede the free passage of their warships, aircraft and submarines—especially through strategic straits.

At the same time the American plan would assuage Ecuador's prickly sensitivities and even American tuna fishers who balk at recognizing Ecuador's right to issue licenses might agree to buy them from the US government or from a regional association. Whether the taxpayers would continue paying for them would remain to be seen.

Ecuador has consulted Peru and Chile and has responded to the US proposal, by a formula of its own, handed to the US in Geneva where 150 nations recently began a meeting for a further six-week discussion on the proposed Law of the Sea. The Ecuadorian formula, though general, is said to "narrow the parameters" of the dispute.

Heretofore, small, proud Ecuador has stiffly refused to deal with the US because of—largely ineffective—congressional sanctions on aid and military credits. Now, newly-rich from oil, Ecuador can afford to be more conciliatory.

"We will discuss a regional association or possible joint US-Ecuadorian fishing ventures or any other idea," said an Ecuadorian source, "provided that there are no sanctions against us and also," he added significantly, "provided Ecuadorian laws are respected."

Benjamin Welles

Mr. Welles is the former diplomatic correspondent of *The New York Times.*

Two on the Common Market

Britain Votes on Staying In

by Richard Rose

When Britons vote in the country's first-ever referendum on June 5, the matter at issue will nominally be the country's continued membership in the European economic community. But the ballot will also be a test of the nation's political leadership. A vote to remain in the Common Market will be a vote of confidence in Conservative, Liberal and Labour leaders who have campaigned for a decade to bring Britain into Europe. A vote against will be a massive vote of no confidence in the country's political establishment.

The referendum is not being held because Britain's elitist political leaders have suddenly become enamored of progressive and populist institutions. It is being held because of the political weakness of the Prime Minister. During his first term as Prime Minister in 1967, Harold Wilson sought unsuccessfully to take Britain into the Common Market. After Labour went into opposition in 1970, left-wing pressures within the party forced Mr. Wilson to vote against British entry in 1973 on Tory terms achieved by Edward Heath. The Labour party has since refused to send MPs to the European Parliament at Strasbourg.

Mr. Wilson would not commit the party to take Britain out of Europe because moderate "social democratic" MPs such as Roy Jenkins, Anthony Crosland and Jim Callaghan favor British entry. George Thomson, Labour's negotiator with the EEC in 1967, pronounced Mr. Heath's terms as good as any he

Richard Rose is professor of politics at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, and a contributor to *The Times* of London.

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could get; he has since moved to Brussels to become one of Britain's two commissioners there. Wilson secured party endorsement of renegotiating terms of membership.

Following Labour's return to office after the February 1974 general election, James Callaghan, the Foreign Secretary, spent a year renegotiating the EEC's common agricultural policy, its budget, its intentions for economic and monetary union, the interests of the Commonwealth and developing countries, and problems of harmonizing taxes among the nine EEC member states. Europeans described the negotiations as blackmail or playacting. However, in the economic climate created by the oil crisis, some concessions were easily obtained. For example Britain's weakened economic condition has been a good argument for reducing community dues related to each member country's wealth.

The Foreign Secretary's efforts were endorsed by a majority of 398 to 172 in the House of Commons last month. But a majority of Labour MPs voted against their own government's measure, including seven Cabinet ministers and 31 junior ministers. Only the solid support of the Conservative party saved Mr. Wilson's policy from defeat. Because Mr. Wilson had been accused of betraying party policies during the 1964-70 Labour government, the party's 1974 election manifesto contained a cast iron commitment to a national referendum to follow promptly the conclusion of the Common Market negotiations. Initially opponents of the Common Market propounded this idea in the belief that public opinion was against the EEC. But public opinion has been volatile. Most members of Parliament grudgingly accept the referendum because they now think public opinion favors Britain's remaining in the EEC. The line-up of those supporting remaining in the Common Market looks like an establishment roster of "the great and the good." It includes the leaders of the three major parties, Harold Wilson, Margaret Thatcher and the Liberals' Jeremy Thorpe; more than three-quarters of present and 19 ex-Cabinet ministers; many retired senior civil servants; the great bulk of leaders in British industry and banking; nearly all the national press; and a minority of trade union leaders.

The arguments for maintaining British membership in the Common Market combine several motives. The common theme is usually negative: Britain can no longer afford to go it alone. Gone is the hope of renewed influence in world diplomacy that entranced Sir Winston Churchill, and the hope of an economic boom that attracted Harold Macmillan, two earlier British proponents of European cooperation. In Dean Acheson's phrase of a decade ago, Britain has "lost an Empire and not yet found a role." The Foreign Office reckons that the best way to amplify Britain's diplomatic voice is through joint action with Germany, France and other members of the community. Significantly, one of the British commissioners in Brussels, Sir Christopher Soames, is in charge of the community's foreign affairs. British diplomats no longer feel that their voice will be influential in Washington, as it was in the days when Britain was a broker between America and Continental Europe in the creation of NATO.

The economic case for remaining in Europe has increased with the 22 percent devaluation of the pound against continental currencies in the past four years. Today Britain is dependent upon foreign borrowings to finance Labour's expensive welfare policies, and Socialist takeovers of industry. A Royal Institute of International Affairs pamphlet drily notes that economic weakness inhibits national independence: "The choice for Britain is not between sovereignty and integration so much as between one form of interdependence and another."

British business looks to the EEC as the market offering the best customers for British products. It sees less prospect for increased exports to traditional Commonwealth markets, or to America today. A survey of business leaders conducted by *The Times* last month found that 419 favored remaining in the Common Market, three were against, and one was a "don't know." More than half predicted foreign exchange earnings would drop and unemployment rise if Britain left the Common Market, and 42 percent said withdrawal would mean a cut in capital investment.

The political arguments for belonging to Europe express the mood of tired politicians. Instead of proclaiming that other nations now have an opportunity to copy British institutions, pro-Market politicians are encouraging Britain to go European, from such relatively minor things as decimal currency and metric measures to major questions of economic and foreign policy. Both Labour and Conservative leaders privately speak with admiration rather than disparagement of continental practices that accompany living standards far higher than those of Britain for most members of the EEC.

Opposition to the Common Market comes from the far left and the far right, embracing both Enoch Powell, a racist orator enamored of past imperial glories, and Anthony Benn, a Socialist Cabinet minister whose name is anathema to British businessmen. Trade unions made possible a two-to-one vote against the Common Market at a special Labour party conference on April 26. The Scottish and Welsh Nationalist parties are also against *British* membership in the Common Market. They wish Scotland and Wales to be free to decide their own foreign policy independent of London. Because anti-Marketeers disagree among themselves about so many other issues, the chairman of the Get Britain Out Committee must keep his speakers apart to make sure they concentrate on attacking the Common Market rather than each other.

The retention of British sovereignty is the primary

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argument against the Common Market. The insularity of England has long made its people suspicious of foreigners and foreign ways. The term "race" is used to differentiate Frenchmen and Germans from Englishmen, as well as Africans and Orientals. Anti-Market Labour MPs echo the words of right-wing Col. Blimps in proclaiming the need to preserve the sovereignty of Parliament. Ironically the referendum ballot undermines Parliament, for it transfers the power of decision-making from elected representatives to the people *en masse*.

Left-wing Socialists are economic nationalists. Having gained office in Britain they wish to control the nation's economy without approval or hindrance from Brussels. Since Britain must look abroad for customers to buy the goods it must sell to finance imports of essential foodstuffs and raw materials, anti-Marketeers say that trade should be with the predominantly nonwhite Commonwealth and with Eastern Europe. They also anticipate that Britain could negotiate preferential access to continental markets when withdrawing from the Common Market.

The attraction of the Common Market to British business is countered by trade unionists denouncing the EEC as "capitalist." The fact that continental Socialist parties and trade unions favor the community and Britain's continued membership, is dismissed as irrelevant. The Labour left looks elsewhere for inspiration. Shortly before voting against the Market, the Labour party decided to receive fraternal delegates from the Communist controlled East German government at the party's October conference.

The decision-making processes of the community are under fire as undemocratic. Even pro-Market enthusiasts admit that a nine-nation multilingual bureaucracy is confusing and slow-moving. But they ascribe weaknesses to too much consultation with the foreign ministers of the member states, each of whom holds a veto, and not enough consultation with the European Parliament. Anti-Marketeers in Britain reject the idea of improving the community by creating a directly elected European Parliament. Such a measure would only legitimate the nation's current loss of sovereignty, the real basis of much opposition.

Currently opinion polls show that most of the British electorate thinks the Common Market is good for jobs, earnings and diplomacy, but bad because it raises prices, taxes and the cost of living. The polls indicate, at the start of the referendum campaign, a potential two-to-one majority for Britain remaining in Europe. Conservative and liberal supporters are very heavily in favor of the Market. Labour voters, like their leaders, are split.

If a referendum majority favored leaving the Common Market, it would be a repudiation of the political establishment as well as a shock to the pollsters. The government's response might add another surprise. The pro-Market Cabinet could refuse to implement the decision on the ground that it could not negotiate satisfactory withdrawal terms from European nations with whom it would have to continue to trade, whether inside or outside the Market. Pro-Market MPs could argue that Britain, with the highest inflation in Western Europe and unemployment rapidly rising toward pre-World War II levels, would be too weak to bear the transitional costs of withdrawal. A low turnout or a narrow margin against the community might justify ignoring popular wishes in this unprecedented referendum.

Critics of the Common Market may be right when they argue that a big "Yes" vote will not solve the country's economic problems. Ironically entry to the EEC has emphasized Britain's economic decline. It consistently shows up poorer on measures of economic strength and welfare benefits than all other member nations except Italy and the Republic of Ireland.

A big vote to remain in the Common Market will be a vote of confidence in the country's political leadership, for the moment at least. It will not guarantee long-term confidence, however, if the economic crisis forecast by most commentators hits Britain with full force a few months from now.

Unrealized Ambitions

Where Europe Stands

On a blustery Brussels morning five years ago, as the flags of their six nations flapped in the wind, officials of the European Common Market paid tribute to the founders of their customs union and made hopeful speeches of progress to come. At a reception inside, the officials and some of the grand old men of the European unity movement clinked their long-stemmed crystal champagne glasses and spoke privately of a post-Gaullist decade that would lead an even larger European Community to substantial economic and possibly political cohesion.

Unlike the wine, the promises and hopes have turned sour as the 1970s reach midpoint. Nine flags rather than six now fly outside the community's Berlaymont headquarters, but otherwise the march of the Europeans to unity has been mostly backwards. The May 9 anniversary of the Schuman declaration of 1950, which led to the creation of the Coal and Steel Community and the first important step toward economic union and subsequent prosperity, was anything but a celebration this year. It was marked instead by candidly pessimistic assessments of where Europe stands, by the announcement of the retirement of Jean Monnet, who did so much to bring modern postwar Europe into being, and by the implicit recognition that the struggle for Europe remains one between Gaullism

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and federalism even though the original protagonists have departed.

Monnet's retirement to his memoirs, more than 20 years after the standard retirement age of 65, was timed to coincide with the May 9 anniversary and was especially symbolic for Europeans. A unique Frenchman who dealt comfortably with the British in the two wars and who was widely admired by official Americans, Monnet worked for European union largely behind the scenes and never from elected office. He cajoled and inspired a generation of European leaders to develop the community institutions such as the Coal and Steel Community, which he headed, and the Common Market that brought the Western European nations together as a trading and economic if not political force. Monnet is also folding up his Action Committee for a United States of Europe, that once-active collection of prominent Europeans whose influence and lobbying activities almost succeeded in transforming the European unity movement into a potent and durable political force.

Part of Monnet's success lay in his resilience, his ability to bounce back from such Gaullist-inspired setbacks as the defeat of the European Defense Community, the French vetoes of British entry into the Common Market and the French boycott of 1965. He would always return to rally his followers, politicians, diplomats and Brussels bureaucrats to new works.

Monnet going into retirement retains his essential optimism, but the day he announced his plans one of his former deputies issued as pessimistic a prognosis for European union as ever emerged from official European headquarters. A committee of prestigious Europeans, commissioned by the Common Market executive and headed by Robert Marjolin, gives a brutally frank official imprimatur to what European journalists have been writing for some time: the movement of Europe to economic union, and with it, by implication, to political union, has slipped backward in the last five years. Hit by inflation, unemployment and the jarring rise in oil prices, the nine nations of the community have abandoned most pretenses of unified action to strike out for national solutions, largely ineffective. As revealing as the report itself is the willingness of the community to reverse its general public relations posture of unrelenting official optimism.

As recently as five years ago there was some realistic movement to coordinating economic and monetary policies, to move to a single European currency, at least in terms of exchange rates with the dollar. Coordination by central banks would be followed by coordination by treasury and economic ministries. By 1970 these plans had moved from the lofty stage of summit declarations to working sessions of government ministers and technicians.

Those steps to progress have evaporated and the response of the Marjolin committee is to challenge one of the principal theoretical underpinnings of the European movement. Europe, the committee says, can no longer be brought about imperceptibly and by small steps as Schuman and Monnet counseled. The committee advocates instead a radical and instantaneous transformation to economic union reinforced with precise deadlines for action by the nine member states. Given present economic conditions and the political will and stability in Western Europe today, the committee's recommendation is as much a cry of desperation as a call to action.

What the report reflects most clearly is that Western Europe is still in the political backwash of the struggle between federalism and Gaullism. Monnet and the federalists tried, and to a point succeeded, in 30 years to implant new supranational institutions on the war-weary bones of the old European states. Charles de Gaulle, in 10 years as president of France, succeeded in limiting the advance of unity and federalism in Europe and in guaranteeing that no European institution such as the Brussels Commission or the Strasbourg Parliament would grow stronger than Europe's leading diplomatic power, which was France. Minus the abrasive theatrics and with some adaptations, like dropping the veto on Britain, de Gaulle's successors have continued basically the same policies. French diplomatic weight remains decisive within the community. Meanwhile federalism, always an alien concept to Europeans, grows more ephemeral, especially as the Europeans become increasingly dubious about large and remote bureaucracies.

In practical terms the struggle between federalism and Gaullism, between basic cooperation and pursuit of national interests, is manifest in disagreements among the Europeans on even the most pressing matters. Energy is the most notable example. Whether dealing in the Middle East or with the United States, the Europeans tend to speak with nine voices more often than with one. A Gaullist no longer resides in the Elysée Palace but Gaullist tenets still guide French foreign policy. Britain inside the community has more often been a French ally than the counterweight to Gaullism that some had hoped for. Despite recent reverses, the community's economic position in the world remains impressive. But no one in Europe, Washington or Moscow confuses supermarkets with submarines nor per capita income with the political influence Europeans say they want to regain.

The Europe of Monnet and Schuman that has been celebrated on past May 9 anniversaries was built from the ashes of defeat and destruction. On this pessimistic anniversary the question becomes, what kind of Europe can de Gaulle's successors build from the quagmire of economic stagflation and political indecision?

Michael D. Mosettig

Mr. Mosettig is formerly Common Market correspondent for the UPI and a news editor for NBC News.

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The Ups and Downs Of Mortgage Interest

by D. P. Tucker

The Federal Home Loan Bank Board is persisting in its long-standing plans to permit federal savings and loan associations to make variable-rate mortgage loans, and, as might be expected, this has raised a bit of a stir in Congress. The bank board's proposals were officially announced in mid-February, and both houses of Congress held hearings in April to consider the vocal opposition of the consumer-interest lobbies. The House has passed a bill to prohibit the bank board from implementing its proposal, and the prognosis does not look good. If Congress squelches the bank board's plan, it will be a victory for the consumer groups.

Under the terms of a variable-rate mortgage, the lender has the authority to raise the interest rate being charged on the loan, without consulting the borrower, whenever tight credit conditions have raised market interest rates generally. Although some small increase in the interest rate can be accommodated merely by stretching out the loan payments over more years, in general the borrower will be forced to pay higher monthly payments when his rate is raised. These payment increases, when they occur, will be unexpected, often sizeable, and painful. They may put some borrowers into real financial trouble.

In the interest of consumer protection, the bank board has proposed some important restrictions on variable-rate loans, including extensive disclosure requirements, strict limits on how rapidly and how much the rates can be raised, and a requirement making it mandatory that the rates be *decreased* whenever that is warranted by a general decline in market rates. A variable-rate mortgage can thus work to the borrower's advantage under certain conditions.

Nevertheless it entails genuine risks for the borrower that are not present with the conventional fixed-rate mortgage that most homebuyers now use. Furthermore the primary argument for permitting variable-rate mortgages has nothing to do directly with individual borrowers; their real purpose is in the stability they will bring to the earnings of the savings and loan associations.

It is argued, probably correctly, that whatever benefits the S&Ls will derive from variable-rate mortgages will flow through, at least in part, to their savers in the form of higher earnings on their savings accounts, and that the increased earnings on the savings accounts will make it possible for the S&Ls to attract more deposits in times of tight money, which in turn will convey important indirect benefits to the public in the form of increased availability of mortgage funds at such times.

Many consumer-interest advocates and members of Congress are suspicious, nevertheless, that the risks and disadvantages will outweigh any indirect benefits to homeowners, and they fear that the savings and loan industry, once it is permitted to do so, will offer variable-rate loans exclusively. They fear that the standard fixed-rate loan that most borrowers want will disappear from the marketplace, or at least become more expensive than it now is, as lenders try to discourage its use.

This is certainly a legitimate concern. Anybody unfortunate enough to have bought a house with a variable-rate mortgage anytime since World War II has paid dearly for his error, as compared with what he would have paid with the usual fixed-rate loan, and it takes something of an act of faith to feel confident that the variable-rate loan has suddenly become preferable.

The Home Loan Bank Board was aware of the consumer and congressional opposition on this issue, but it decided to run the congressional gauntlet anyhow because lifting the current prohibition against variable-rate loans is an important part of a broader program to increase the financial strength of the savings and loan industry, and few people would deny that changes are needed. Under present conditions much of the industry becomes technically bankrupt every time a new round of tight money forces interest rates to new highs. Last fall, when mortgage rates hit their peak, many S&Ls would have been forced very quickly into real bankruptcy if their depositors had tried to draw out any substantial portion of their deposits. This precarious situation threatens the stability of the mortgage and housing markets generally, and the Home Loan Bank Board has good reason to seek regulatory changes that would improve the financial strength of S&Ls. Variable-rate mortgages would be an effective way of doing this.

Given the importance the bank board attaches to its proposal, however, and given the opposition it was certain to arouse, it is remarkable that their proposal lacks any direct benefits for consumers or homeowners. Elementary considerations of political strategy

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D.P. Tucker is a Washington research economist.

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would have called for some concessions to stimulate broader support, but there are none. No matter what the bank board says about consumer safeguards, it is inherently an industry proposal, with all the conservatism and narrowness of outlook that implies, put forth by an agency whose constituency is the savings and loan associations, not the homeowners who depend on them for mortgages.

In particular the bank board has carefully avoided any promise to raise the unrealistic ceilings it now imposes on the interest rates that S&Ls can pay their depositors, even though one of the justifications that has always been given for permitting variable-rate loans is that the deposit-rate ceilings could then be raised. In addition the board proposed no steps to ensure the continued availability of fixed-rate loans, although it could easily have done so. But the clincher, the final indication of its one-sided pro-industry nature, is its total failure to address the problem of the recent mortgage market squeeze on the moderate-income homebuyer.

Since the mid-'60s steadily rising mortgage interest rates have made it tougher and tougher for moderate-income families to afford to buy houses. The prices of new homes have risen as rapidly as average earnings, so even if mortgage interest rates had remained the same, financing the purchase of a new home now would take just as much out of a young family's income as it did 10 years ago. But mortgage rates have not remained the same. From levels under six percent in 1965 they have averaged at least 7.5 percent since 1969, with rates well over eight percent since late 1973. This has meant that the monthly mortgage payments a homebuyer must agree to make in order to purchase a house, which is often a more relevant measure of the cost of the house than the purchase price, have risen substantially faster than salaries in the past decade. As a consequence moderate-income families are being squeezed out of the market for ownership. They cannot afford to buy nearly as much housing, relative to their income, as they could a decade ago.

Congress has been sensitive to their plight, as demonstrated by the billions it has appropriated in recent years to subsidize the mortgage interest costs of moderate-income homebuyers, and it has just finished passing a new round of mortgage interest subsidies this year. With this problem fresh in mind, congressmen may well conclude that the bank board's plan for variable-rate mortgages, which will do nothing for buyers, is a dose of the wrong medicine. This impression is bound to be reinforced if Congress finds appealing the arguments recently made by some economists that the bank board has the right medicine for the moderate-income homebuyers but has been keeping it locked up.

This viewpoint starts from the belief that the high cost of mortgage money since the late '60s has resulted primarily from inflation, and that the standard fixed-rate mortgage is not well suited to the needs of borrowers under inflationary conditions. With inflation the borrower, especially a young one, can expect his income to rise steadily through the years, but the standard mortgage calls for the same payments year after year. Thus the burden of making the mortgage payments is heaviest, relative to income, in the first few years, and it declines steadily thereafter. Although this is fine for borrowers who can handle the initial payments burden, it means that prospective homebuyers who are squeezed out because they can't afford the high initial mortgage payments are getting a raw deal. Many of them would be quite able to meet the payments for a house if the payments were rearranged to be lower in the first few years and to rise gradually from year to year as their incomes rose.

There do exist certain types of mortgages, some of which are used in other countries, that have this characteristic and that are far more attractive to borrowers. One that has recently been examined by economists is the graduated-payment or "low-start" mortgage. With this type of mortgage the contract itself spells out a repayment schedule that calls for lower payments in the first few years, followed by gradually rising payments later. The Home Loan Bank Board's current regulations prohibit federal savings and loan associations from making this kind of repayment arrangement on their loans, except in a trivial form, and no other lenders have been willing to try it. But it would take just a stroke of the pen for the bank board to remove this unnecessary regulation and grant permission for S&Ls to experiment in this area.

S&Ls are not likely to implement this idea, even experimentally, however, without further encouragement. The idea of lower monthly payments in the early years of a mortgage does not appeal to them at all.

What sort of further encouragement might be needed? The situation has all the ingredients for a classic horse trade. The bank board's permission for S&Ls to make variable-rate loans could be made subject to the condition that S&Ls must also offer graduated payments schedules. For example S&Ls might be required to offer variable-rate borrowers the option of a payment schedule according to which the monthly payments in the first year could not exceed the payments that would normally be required on a conventional level-payment mortgage taken out at a six percent interest rate. That could make an enormous difference, for it would reduce the monthly payments on a $20,000 mortgage (for a $25,000 house, for example) by $25 to $30 a month under current conditions, with even bigger reductions on larger loans.

The payments would obviously have to increase in subsequent years, but a regulation limiting the annual rate of increase to something like six percent would provide more than enough room for upward adjustments to ensure that the loan would be paid off in the usual 25 or 30 years. In fact, with this rate of increase,

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the payments could level off after seven or eight years under present conditions, without rising any further after that point. In the meantime for the first five years the homeowner would get the benefit of having his monthly payments lower than they would have been under a conventional mortgage.

To most bankers this proposal is downright radical. Nevertheless if the industry wants variable-rate mortgages badly enough, it may be willing to pay this price. It lies fully within the regulatory power of the Home Loan Bank Board to impose such a package deal.

The Right to Treatment

Trials and Psychiatric Tribulations

by Alan Meisel

When Kenneth Donaldson was involuntarily committed to the Florida State Hospital at Chattahootchee in January 1957, he was told by the judge that "he was being sent to the hospital for 'a few weeks' to 'take some of this new medication,' after which the judge said that he was certain that Donaldson would be 'all right' and would 'come back here.'"

Despite the kindly judge's predictions, Donaldson spent more than 15 years at Chattahootchee, and it was not until a lawsuit was filed on his behalf, charging violations of his federal civil rights and seeking damages from hospital and Florida mental health officials, that Donaldson actually was released from the hospital. A jury in a federal trial court awarded Donaldson $38,500 in damages, an appeals court has upheld the verdict in a potentially far-reaching opinion, and the case is now under review by the United States Supreme Court.

Donaldson's case has been called a "landmark, right-to-treatment case" because Donaldson claimed and the appeals court agreed that if the state takes away an individual's freedom in order to "treat" him, then it is bound by its promise to provide treatment. And if treatment is not offered, then the patient must be released, at least if he is not dangerous. This much is required by the constitutional guarantee that no person be deprived of his liberty without due process of law. What seems to be an eminently fair and logical decision has not always been so apparent to state hospital officials. Donaldson's situation is a case in point, as the evidence at the trial makes abundantly clear.

During his 15 years of hospitalization, Donaldson received no commonly accepted psychiatric treatment. In part this was because, as a Christian Scientist, he had refused to take medications or to submit to electroshock therapy, yet no other treatment was offered to him. Donaldson's doctors claimed that he had received "religious" and "recreational" therapies, but these amounted to no more than permitting him to attend religious services and participate in recreational activities that the appeals court observed would have been allowed even in a prison. It was also claimed that he received "milieu therapy," but the doctors were unable to point to anything about the milieu that was of any special therapeutic value to Donaldson. In fact the milieu consisted of a sheltered hospital with other mental patients; Donaldson himself was usually confined to a locked ward of about 60 beds with only enough room between them for a chair. While milieu therapy, when properly practiced in accord with accepted psychiatric principles, might be of significant benefit to certain psychiatric patients, it is, according to Charles Halpern, of a Washington, DC public interest law firm that represents mental patients, "the easiest therapeutic claim for an institution to assert and the most difficult for a patient to refute." The courts through which the *Donaldson* case has meandered over the past three years have, however, uniformly agreed that this claim had been successfully refuted by the facts of Donaldson's long confinement.

Not only did Donaldson fail to receive any psychiatric treatment, but it is possible that the doctors actually took affirmative steps to assure that he would not be released. There is a hint in the appeals court opinion that some of the doctors at Chattahootchee considered Donaldson a pain in the neck, which not only contributed to their failure to treat him but might

Alan Meisel is an attorney and assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh.

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explain the efforts they made to block his release, first to a halfway house, and later to a responsible friend who offered to provide him with a place to live and whatever other care he needed.

Donaldson was also denied grounds privileges at Chattahootchee, though one expert witness testified that a person in his condition should have been routinely granted them and should also have been a likely candidate for early discharge from the hospital. During one eight-and-one-half-year period of hospitalization, Donaldson talked with a psychiatrist—characterized by the appeals court as "the simplest and most routine form of psychiatric treatment"—for an average of only 14 minutes a year. There was evidence that this psychiatrist had stated to Donaldson that he "talked only to patients that he wanted to," as if to substantiate a vendetta against Donaldson. Most telling of all is that Donaldson was prevented from participating in "occupational" therapy because his doctor feared that he would learn touch-typing and use this skill to prepare legal petitions to obtain his release from Chattahootchee.

Only the most foolhardy or malevolent members of the staffs of state hospitals will ignore the meaning of the *Donaldson* decision. Most psychiatrists probably do not treat their patients with the cavalier disregard experienced by Donaldson, but for those who wish to, a warning has been posted: patients, too, are people. If the Supreme Court upholds the *Donaldson* decision that involuntarily hospitalized, nondangerous psychiatric patients have a constitutional right to be treated or released, it will have signaled that the basic humanity of psychiatric patients must be respected by requiring that the government keep its bargain to provide professionally acceptable and responsible treatment for their illnesses.

Another case wending its way through the federal courts complements the *Donaldson* decision. Originally known as *Wyatt* vs. *Stickney* (but since renamed *Wyatt* vs. *Aderholt* and later *Wyatt* vs. *Hardin* to reflect the changing identity of the named defendant, who is the Alabama commissioner of mental health), this case has resulted in the issuance of a far-reaching, highly detailed court order prescribing the minimum acceptable physical, staffing and psychological criteria for the state institutions for the mentally ill and retarded in Alabama.

The *Wyatt* case has been widely acclaimed by some (and reviled by others) as a "right-to-treatment" case. Actually the case establishes only the preconditions to treatment—adequate staffing ratios, a humane physical and psychological environment—that had long been recognized not only as desirable but constitutionally required in prisons. While the recognition of their applicability to psychiatric hospitals was long overdue, even if conditions were to change overnight to conform to the required standards, there would still be no assurance that treatment *would* in fact take place, only that it *could*.

A Supreme Court opinion upholding the award of damages to persons who do not receive treatment would certainly prove an incentive to provide treatment, so that *Donaldson* is perhaps more appropriately characterized as a right-to-treatment case than *Wyatt*. Yet, ultimately, it too will not be sufficient to assure that persons involuntarily hospitalized in state psychiatric institutions receive appropriate treatment. In the *Wyatt* case there have been continual forays into federal court by the plaintiffs to enforce provisions of the court order. Earlier this year contempt-of-court proceedings were initiated against physicians and hospital administrators accused of violating a provision of the court order requiring the patient's consent to the administration of electroshock therapy. Truly effective implementation of court decrees—that is, implementation allowing patients to obtain the benefits of the rights to which they are theoretically entitled—depends ultimately upon the good faith and sensitivity of those to whom the care and custody of the patients are entrusted.

Yet even with the utmost of goodwill, the right-to-treatment decisions leave unanswered serious questions of law and public policy. Where will the money come from? The costs of treatment may far exceed the costs of the custodial care that is the present bill of fare of many state hospitals. Will the right to treatment, which began as an obligation of the state to provide treatment, be transformed into an obligation of the patient to accept treatment? Or should patients—even those involuntarily confined to a hospital—have a right to refuse treatment, even though the exercise of this right might prolong hospitalization? Should a patient be obligated to accept a treatment, even of proven efficacy, if it carries with it the risk of serious side effects as do many drugs currently used in the treatment of psychiatric illnesses? More fundamentally, should the state be accorded the power to hospitalize persons who have committed no criminal act—preventive detention in the guise of treatment? Does the cost to society from the preventive detention of a large number of harmless people outweigh the benefit from the detention of a small number who may actually commit harmful criminal acts if not detained? Finally, should patients have not only a right to be treated by a "right to the right treatment"? If so will this mean that the provision of psychiatric care is to be left to the ultimate discretion of judges rather than psychiatrists?

These and similar related issues will not be confronted by the Supreme Court, not because the Court will be evasive, but because these questions have not been presented for resolution in the *Donaldson* case. Surely, however, these questions are now in the public arena, and though their resolution must await another day, that day cannot be postponed indefinitely. The Kenneth Donaldsons of this world will not abide it.

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Stanley Kauffmann on films

Monty Python and the Holy Grail

(Cinema 5)

The Invitation

(Janus)

If news from Britain these days is only moderately good, it's exceptional, and welcome. The British economic gloom is made even gloomier by the fact that Ken Russell, of *Tommy*, sometimes seems to be the only filmmaker on the island able to get backing. Untrue. Here is *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, which is neither as sparkling as it is said to be nor as bad as it seems to be at the start. But it's pretty good—thus, as British phenomena go these days, exceptional.

If you are watching *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, the BBC series now being run on PBS, you have more than some idea of the kind of film this is, except that the film has fewer sags and is better photographed. The previous Python film, *And Now for Something Completely Different* (*TNR*, Sept. 22, '72) had the hijinks ebullience of university humor, than which jinks there is none higher, and was a series of skits that hit or missed. *Holy Grail* is a series of skits on one general theme, so is disguised as an organic story. It too has hits and misses. When it hits, it makes some clear statements of national humor.

Whatever their flops in other comic veins (film slapstick, for instance), the British have always excelled at the tease. The BBC Radio's Goon Show, the Ealing comedies of the *Kind Hearts and Coronets* stripe, and now the *Monty Python* series, all depend on teasing around at a certain level of sophistication. Leg-pull is the British term, and the pleasant glow of the leg-pull, rather than the yok or boff, is the aim of *Holy Grail*. What's up for teasing here is the whole body of Arthurian legend, and the basic leg-pull is of the sanctity of that legend and of British sanctimoniousness toward it. Part of the leg-pull is through period realism. (Arthur identifies himself to two bedraggled caitiffs, and after he passes, one grimy serf says to the other, "He *must* be a king. He hasn't got shit all over him.") Part of it is just the reverse: anachronism. (A peasant launches a political tirade at Arthur in modern lingo.) Part of it is by digression into *non sequitur*. (Arthur hails a sentry at a castle, and in 10 seconds the formal military exchange has gone off into a long irrelevant discussion.) Part depends on obvious lunacy. (All the knights "ride" by hopping around as children do on their own two feet, while attendants behind them clomp coconut shells to sound like horses' hoofs.) Part depends on contemporary recognitions. (Arthur's upper-class accent is markedly different from that of almost everyone he meets, and seems to underscore his incomprehension of everything around him.) And more.

I, with inverted snobbism, tend to resist the snobbism of this kind of comedy, the sort of film that heavily implies, "You and I are cultivated, just a wee bit jaded, and will get these superior jokes." (In another culture it's the Marcel Marceau syndrome.) And *Holy Grail* gets off to a particularly lame start in this vein by using fake Swedish subtitles under the credits, a gag that was not fresh when it was used, in reverse, in *The Dove* several years ago. But soon the picture reaches the good leg-pull level, mostly sustained and just moves along in a comic temperament without much actual laughter. I laughed aloud only once. Some wretch is hanging by his wrists from a castle wall in chains. A group of knights below do an anachronistic song and dance. When they finish, the chained wretch manages, above his head, to applaud wanly.

The film was co-directed by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones, who collaborated with several others on the script, and all of them, with still others, are in it. The photography by Terry Bedford is somewhat too pretty; it neither suits the horseplay, nor is it so sharply contrasted as to make an anti-romantic comic point.

Long before its vogue in painting, minimal art, or at least the minimalizing instinct, had grown strong in literature and drama. Mostly, I would guess, it was enfeebled imitating of Chekhov, in the belief that if he could do without conventional plot, then the way to be "modern" was simply to have no plot. The difference between this school and naturalism is mostly one of intent. Both schools try to eliminate dramaturgic interference with the veristic flow of events, but the naturalist usually has a sociological/political purpose while the minimalist has esthetic/characterological goals. Inevitably there have been some (let's call them) minimalist filmmakers. The Czech film *Intimate Lighting* is still the best I know, *Sunday Bloody Sunday* had more minimalism that I think it intended, and the French film *Don't Cry with Your Mouth Full* (*TNR*, May 10) comes modestly close to the ideal.

Now the French-Swiss weigh in with *The Invitation* by Claude Goretta, a fairly extreme example of the plotless film, which depends entirely on our interest in the lives that flow before us—the implications and resonances in them, rather than any developed narrative involving them. Goretta is a colleague of the greatly gifted Alain Tanner, has worked with him in England, has co-directed with him, and has worked for Swiss television. Goretta has made six previous films—one of them called *Chekhov or the Mirror of Lost Lives*! He uses some of Tanner's actors. Like Tanner he has taste, sympathy, intelligence, skill and admirable ambitions. And, like Tanner, he has script troubles.

Goretta wrote *The Invitation* with Michel Viala. As in Chekhov's plays, the protagonist is multiple—the staff of an office. One of the staff, a soft man in early middle-age, lives with his mother; when she dies, he sells their house, moves to a considerable estate outside Geneva, and invites his colleagues to a housewarming party on a Sunday. (He has not left his job; despite his new

(continued on page 33)

Films Worth Seeing

Amarcord. Instant classic. Fellini's touching, bitter, funny lyric of his youth.

Don't Cry with Your Mouth Full. An adolescent French country girl's summer. No "sensitivity," just some wryly seen truth.

Hearts and Minds. Politically pallid, this Vietnam documentary still does some graphic reminding.

Lenny. A first-rate cast in a third-rate script about L. Bruce, well directed by Bob Fosse.

The Passenger. The eye is Antonioni's eye, but the hands are the hands of Esau.

SK

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Private of the Cold War

Alexander Dolgun's Story: An American in the Gulag by Alexander Dolgun with Patrick Watson

(Knopf; $10)

The United States and the Soviet Union were barely talking to each other in 1948. The tenuous friendship of wartime allies had rapidly disintegrated into mutual paranoia. Relations were so bad that Maj. Gen. Lucius D. Clay, chief of the United States zone in Germany, warned Washington on March 5, 1948 that "war may come with dramatic suddenness."

Moscow in the late 1940s and early 1950s was no place for squeamish foreigners. Embassy personnel and their families were constantly followed by Stalin's police. No one could be trusted for anyone could be an informant. The situation was equally difficult for the few American journalists in the city. At one point in the 1950s three American correspondents were convinced one of them would be arrested and tried publicly along with the numerous chauffeurs, butlers and cooks who had disappeared.

While foreigners in Moscow fretted about their safety, Americans at home were searching for Communists. Promising careers were shattered as the Red scare consumed American politics.

In spite of this poisonous Cold War atmosphere Alexander Dolgun, an American, lived and worked in Moscow. As a junior employee of the American Embassy, he was able to enjoy a comfortable life-style unknown to Muscovites.

That life-style abruptly terminated on December 13, 1948 when agents of the MGB (Soviet secret police) picked him up on a Moscow street and carted him off to Lubyanka prison. Dolgun was sure a mistake had been made and that he would soon be released. But that hope vanished when his first interrogator (Col. Sidorov) told him, "We never make mistakes."

Released in 1956 after seven years and seven months of imprisonment, Dolgun has now written a book with Patrick Watson, recounting his battle for survival in Stalin's prison system. Written with anger and humor but without bathos, this is a gripping first-person narrative of brutality and heroism, of man against man, of man against a system and finally, of man against himself.

But the story of Alexander Dolgun is also the story of a man who was considered expendable by the diplomats and politicians who ran the Cold War. He didn't ask to be a participant and, in the end, got nothing from his country for his trouble. Lubyanka prison, headquarters for the MGB (now the KGB) was only a processing center for Dolgun. He was transferred to Lefortovo prison where the pattern of all night interrogations and beatings began in earnest. The Soviets were convinced Dolgun was an American spy, or at least that is what they told him. The prisoner denied it continually but had no way of disproving the charge.

In addition to the beatings, little sleep and inadequate rations, Dolgun was faced with the task of maintaining his sanity. He warded off the threat of chronic depression with his capacity to find joy in the most miserable circumstances. His methods were often ingenious. One day he found that the occasional blasts from a nearby wind tunnel gave him a unique opportunity. Here is his account:

I strode away toward the window I opened my mouth as wide as I could and I filled my lungs and I sang out loud.

I sang

Mairzy doats and dozy doats
And liddle lamzy divey

Loud. I mean really full blast, everything I had. Fortissimo. Boy it felt great!

Dolgun sang as long as the wind tunnel cooperated. One Saturday night, after Sidorov had left for the weekend, the prisoner broke into a chorus of "Saturday Night is the Loneliest Night of the Week."

If such diversions helped save Dolgun, so did his arrogance. A prisoner of Joseph Stalin and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was hardly in any position to taunt his captors, but Dolgun did just that. When Sidorov tried to interrogate him, Dolgun taunted him, teased him and humiliated him without mercy. The slow-witted Sidorov could only retaliate with his fists, which he did often and effectively.

In the midst of one interrogation (all were conducted in Russian) the following exchange took place:

I laughed out loud and said in English, "Is this the Chattanooga Choo-Choo?"

"What's that?" Sidorov said sharply.

I said, "Why don't you give me a shine?"

"Prisoner, you are forbidden to speak English!"

Later Sidorov and another interrogator took a liking to a Parker pen and Dolgun took notice of the Soviet criminal code:

"Arrest him!" I said, nodding from Sidorov to the other interrogator. "He's committed anti-Soviet propaganda. Praising foreign goods. That's one of my charges. Ten years if you can prove it, and I'll be your witness. Arrest him!"

Dolgun was knocked to the floor for that but he had achieved something precious: he had stalemated his captors. He had tired Sidorov and driven him to desperation. This triumph, however, did not end the ordeal, for Dolgun was then shipped to Sukhanovka prison.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has described in *The Gulag Archipelago* what awaited Dolgun:

Sukhanovka was the most terrible prison the MGB had. Its very name was used to intimidate prisoners. Interrogators would hiss it threateningly. And you'd not be able to question those who had been there: either they were insane and talking only disconnected nonsense, or they were dead.

Dolgun did not die there, much to the consternation of Maj. Kozhukov who battered his prisoner day and night. According to Solzhenitsyn, Dolgun is the only known person to walk out of Sukhanovka in one piece. That may be hyperbole but Dolgun's triumph over the worst Stalin had to offer surely surprised his captors.

Having temporarily run out of tor-

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tures, the authorities sent their prisoner to a labor camp in the Russian hinterland. There Dolgun quickly learned the art of survival in the camps and picked up a knowledge of medicine extensive enough for him to perform a successful emergency leg amputation on a fellow prisoner. However his medical education was rudely interrupted; the authorities demanded he return to Moscow.

Waiting for him there was Michael Ryumin, number two in the secret police. Ryumin was anxious to extract a confession from the prisoner and, despite his lofty position, was not above clubbing Dolgun with a rubber truncheon.

It is impossible to know for sure why Stalin and his cohorts had such an intense interest in Dolgun. There has been speculation that a public espionage trial was being prepared and that Dolgun was to be a participant. But this was never verified and the mystery endures.

In any case, Dolgun tells us that Ryumin and the other interrogators suddenly lost interest in him. Dolgun was returned to the labor camp and the inquisitors disappeared from his life.

For Dolgun the remaining years in camp consisted of continued medical education, the death of close friends, two romances and, finally, the death of Stalin. When the dictator passed away, life in the camps changed dramatically. Enforcement became lax and guards were suddenly solicitous of prisoners. It was the beginning of the end of a long ordeal that had snuffed out countless millions of lives. Release came on July 13, 1956 but Dolgun was not permitted to leave the Soviet Union or have contact with the American Embassy. If he did, he could expect life imprisonment.

One of the more puzzling legacies of Dolgun's story was the attitude of the United States government toward one of its citizens. When Dolgun was arrested, the United States presented a formal note of protest to the Soviet government. The Russians ignored it and the United States warned Dolgun's family in America not to make any public protests for fear of jeopardizing his life. So everyone shut up while Sidorov, Kozhukov and Ryumin battered his flesh.

Even after his release Alexander Dolgun received no help from the United States. Efforts by his family to have the State Department take his case up with the proper Soviet authorities were spurned.

In the mid-'50s America was still consumed by its fetish with communism. Like John Stewart Service, Owen Lattimore, John Paton Davies and others, Alexander Dolgun became a victim of the Cold War. His long stay in the Soviet Union, though against his will, tainted him in the eyes of his fellow countrymen.

Not until 1970, when Richard Nixon decided to call a halt to the Cold War he helped intensify many years earlier, did Dolgun's sister find an American official willing to help. John P. Humes, the new ambassador to Austria, took the case to Secretary of State William P. Rogers who discussed it with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. Alexander Dolgun finally left the Soviet Union on December 21, 1971 and is now working for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Alexander Dolgun was a private in the Cold War; privates are the cannon fodder of wars. While he suffered at the hands of his captors, men built reputations and careers through vigorous prosecution of the Cold War. To worry over the fate of Private Dolgun was to be tender hearted and suspect. So Dolgun was forgotten by all but his immediate family.

Had Dolgun not made the mistake of being powerless, he never would have seen the inside of Sukhanovka or felt the force of Ryumin's blows. But Dolgun survived both brutality and neglect, and has given us this stunning account of his experiences, confirming the inhumanity of Stalin and his system, and raising some ugly questions about past American leaders and their attitude toward humanity.

David Schneiderman

David Schneiderman is assistant editor of the op-ed page of *The New York Times.*

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Canon Fodder

The Twenties: From Notebooks and Diaries of the Period by Edmund Wilson edited by Leon Edel

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $10)

The long, lustrous shelfload of books by Edmund Wilson is not yet complete. We have here excerpts from his notebooks and diaries of the 1920s, which he was getting into publishable form when he died in 1972 and have now been prepared for publication by Leon Edel. Since Edel reports that Wilson's notebooks comprise some 2125 manuscript pages in 41 "stout ledger-type notebooks," there may well be more yet to come. Meanwhile Daniel Aaron is advising Edmund Wilson's widow in editing the correspondence.

All such, of course, will be supplementary to the books that Wilson himself published during his lifetime. *Axel's Castle, The Triple Thinkers, The Wound and the Bow, To the Finland Station, Patriotic Gore,* the several chronicle collections; was ever a good critic so prolific? Of Edmund Wilson this may be said: he did not die without first having explained himself. The talent he had, he used to the fullest.

The Twenties is montage: jottings, impressions, descriptions, observations, brief commentaries on his experience as a young writer in New York City. These were the years when he was working first for *Vanity Fair* and then for *The New Republic,* while also writing fiction and poetry, and trying his hand at drama and even ballet. He was in and out of love—with Edna Millay and several others; he married the actress Mary Blair, then was divorced; he had lengthy liaisons with several women including a proletarian lass from Brooklyn; finally he married again. He passed considerable time at the family home in New Jersey. He traveled to Europe, New Orleans, the West Coast. He began writing *Axel's Castle.* He had a nervous breakdown, as they called it then, and spent some weeks in a sanatorium. While doing all these things and more, he jotted down his thoughts in notebooks, or else on scrap paper which he

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then copied out in the notebooks.

As a book, I'm sorry to say, *The Twenties* isn't very much. To be truthful it is rather dull. The reason is quite simple: Edmund Wilson's formidable intellect wasn't impressionistic in its manifestation, but deliberate and logical, and his first impressions and spontaneous jottings are of no great perceptiveness. It is not what Wilson first sensed in an incident or a new book or whatever, but what he could make out of it, that made him the critic he was. Compare, for example, his first description of a show at the Olympic Burlesque in the notebooks with the published version in *The Shores of Light*. The first observation concentrates on the vulgarity of the burlesque show itself; the published piece ends up with an emphasis upon the astonishment and awe of the masculine audience. The latter is what makes the piece. It required the sitting down and writing formally about the experience to bring out the most important observation.

I get the feeling that Wilson was compiling these notebooks almost out of a sense of duty—as if he felt that as an artist he was obliged to keep a notebook, and did so. There is a kind of high seriousness about the recording of the contents, even though most of what is included is trivial stuff. In Boswell's *Life of Johnson* there is an anecdote about a German baron who was observed jumping over some chairs and tables, and explaining his actions by saying, "Sh'apprends t'etre fif." Edmund Wilson too appears to be trying to practice being lively and spontaneous, and the effect is too often labored.

Edel, in one of his excellent commentaries, remarks upon the four-letter frankness with which Wilson details his sexual adventures with a waitress, and reminds us that such boldness antedates the erotic writing that is now commonplace. Perhaps. I found these episodes painfully self-conscious, however, as if the author were setting out to demonstrate to himself his ability to write about such things. What they remind me most of is another 19th-century diary, published recently as *My Secret Life*. There is the same terribly earnest recording, with no humor or zest about it.

Edel rightly makes much of the fact that at this period Wilson seems most at his ease with waitresses, dancing girls, prostitutes, etc., because they are below his social level and outside his early experience. I find it interesting that it is only when describing his doings with the waitress that Wilson ventures the explicit detail; with sexual companions closer to his own intellectual and social station he is very discreet, and the four-letter words are largely missing.

If we read between the lines of this book, Edel says, we can perceive the despair that Wilson was then feeling, and which culminated in his breakdown. This may well be so; but to distinguish that note one must indeed read *between* the lines. It is not overt. The sense that emerges most strongly from this book, for myself at least, is of the author's essential loneliness. For all his many friends and the relish for talk, he is separated from his outward experience by a kind of wall of aloofness, which he would like to breach but cannot. He seems to be a spectator, somewhat innocent, and also very preoccupied; one gets the impression that Wilson's intellectuality, his absorption with ideas, won't permit the outside world to be quite real for him. This in spite of the fact that there is a tremendous amount of minute annotation of people, places and things recorded here. The real, or in any event the most important, man seems to exist in his ideas, and since there are very few ideas recorded in the notebooks, much of Edmund Wilson seems also to be missing from them.

This is not to say, however, that there isn't much material here that can inform and amuse. Wilson enjoyed the anecdote, the humorous incident. (Sometimes, though, it seems as if it isn't that Wilson himself thinks it's so funny, as that he knows it is supposed to be.) There are splendid vignettes of E.E. Cummings and John Dos Passos. Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Elinor Wylie and many other Well Known Figures are chronicled, as are many who are not nearly so well known. If Wilson knew them, he recorded them in his notebooks.

During the late 1920s he was beginning to formulate the theory of art and the artist that was later to reach fruition in *The Wound and the Bow*, and Edel both discusses the theory with lucidity in his introduction and points out how it was taking form in Wilson's mind. The passages, unfortunately few in number, in which Wilson is setting down his thoughts about literature are by far the most interesting material in this volume. If there were more of these, *The Twenties* would be more important to the Wilson canon than it is. But clearly Wilson thought while he wrote, and worked out his best ideas in the writing of his essays; they didn't appear to him in preliminary, unmediated form. The result is that these notebooks do not tell us enough about the Edmund Wilson we most wish to know about. But that, after all, was why he wrote his books.

Louis D. Rubin, Jr.

Louis D. Rubin is professor of American literature at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Notable Current Fiction

Legs
by William Kennedy

(Coward, McCann & Geoghegan; $8.95)

One of the pleasures of *Legs*, Kennedy's second novel, is that it drove me back to his first, *The Ink Truck*, now six years old. Both books have in common Kennedy's sustained verbal energy. His is a talent that has traditionally clustered on the front porches of country stores, or in taverns, or on the airwaves of special disc jockeys. It is a compulsive talent, made all the more valuable as the recent world threatens daily to leave words behind. Taking that abandonment as a challenge, Kennedy sometimes seems to show how he can, hocus pocus, weave the whole world with words. His is a spell that works. I'd like to sit down on the bar, or on the stoop, listening to this man pump his language. If Kennedy has a case of *cacoethes loquendi*, still it's compost for growth. To read him is to know how the tomato plants must feel when the nitrogen hits their roots. Yes,

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that's when they know the Big Boys are coming after all.

The Big Boy in *The Ink Truck* was named Bailey, a budding columnist full of baloney, himself and his words. Out on a failing strike from his paper, Bailey dreamed of a gesture that would transcend protest: "He would be done with the mortifying slouch of the timid piss ant." Timid he's not, and piss ant he's not, but what is he? He's a mouthful of style, he's jobless, he's hovering, but he's not transcendent. He's one of the noble zanies to whom the novel of the '60s fondly tended here and abroad. He's hanging just beyond credibility, but just short of myth's ozone.

As if to solve these problems, Kennedy has chosen for his next Big Boy, Mr. Jack "Legs" Diamond, the great gangster, a man who is both entirely credible in that rags-to-riches way of American history and entirely ozonic in the splendiferous way of American headlines. Kennedy's narrator calls him "Horatio Alger out of Finn McCool and Jesse James . . . a pioneer, the founder of the first truly modern gang, the dauphin of the town for years . . . a fusion of the individual life flux with the clear and violent light of American reality." At the time FDR lowered the crippling 14-count indictments against him in 1931, when Legs was 33, he'd gone from Philly's streets to Catskill stills worth $10 million in warehouse stock alone. He'd gone from city urchin to the slickest of the early gangsters and on to forced hibernation in Catskill where a local wag described him as "the biggest name we've had locally since Rip Van Winkle woke up." He was a man with gargantuan appetites and deeds; Kennedy's style would have had to invent them if they didn't exist. Legs Diamond has innate credibility. You don't believe this character is a real possibility? Well, go look him up yourself.

Legs had to retire from New York City when he shot up a customer in his own nightclub, shot him once in the stomach, once in the forehead, twice in the temple and twice in the groin. Then he cracked the man's brother on the head with the spent revolver. On an upstate lark, Legs tried to hang a local farmer who had a private cider business. In the Catskills he ran up against a stubborn rum-running competitor, and dismembered and burned his body in a still.

Legs is an unflinching description of these and more: of Legs' attempts to smuggle heroin; his buying of politicians, judges and cops; his whoring, whorehouses, women and wife (who stuck by him past even the end). A lady's man and a tough's tough, Diamond had a body that shone all over with scar tissue in certain light. Women, it's said, loved to trace the scars with their fingers. An outlaw's outlaw, Legs eluded cops and courts alike; he died, finally, of three bullets from members of his own gang. Legs was the idol of America.

He also became the idol of Marcus Gorman, Kennedy's narrator and Diamond's lawyer, who is a mixture of the best qualities of Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby* and Jack Burden in *All the King's Men*, but he's older than his predecessors, so is more reconciled to the ways of the world then either of them. Gorman admits the murders, stills, heroin and filth, but champions the fame, fun and fantasy that were inextricably webbed in the violence and extralegal activity of his client. Marcus Gorman is no Clarence Darrow picking his clients for righteous reasons. And Legs Diamond is deadlier than either Gatsby or Willie Stark. As in all memoir novels, the ultimate interest lies in the rememberer's sensibility. *Legs* will stand on Gorman's case for his client. Or it will fall on the same, for not everyone will accept such casual cynicism embedded in lush metaphor as Gorman produces.

The pretense around which Gorman organizes the novel is that Legs never died. Indeed, Jack's alive twice over. First, "he was unquestionably an ancestral paradigm for modern urban gangsters, upon whom his pioneering [was] obviously not lost." He left "a legacy of money and guns that would dominate the American city on through the 1970s," even though his latter-day followers, "such as Richard Nixon . . . lacked the white core fantasy that can give evil a mythical dimension." Second, Legs did have that "white core fantasy," a capacity for living at "the outer limit of boldness." Diamond could be religious, know the importance of the rosary, go to church sincerely and still outgangsterize the rest, because he made no judgments about the quality of life. He took what came and responded in kind, on its own terms, transforming it in the process. At the victory party after the last trial Legs faced, Gorman raised a glass to him, saying "I toast also to his uncanny ability to bloom in hostile seasons and to survive the blasts of doom." Gorman's implicit claim is that such survival is the unrequited dream at the psychic center of modern urban life.

Speaking through Gorman, Kennedy has touched the myth of the American city's soul at the moment it began to spread toward Europe and toward the outlying parts of its own land. Kennedy's interests are clearly sociological and psychological, but he is a novelist at bottom. He wants the sort of indefinite and suggestive truth germane to fiction, hostile to statistics, and finally dependent on the lode of language mined in the privacy of imagination. Kennedy says he wrote the novel obsessively over more than five years. His care and devotion are clearly repaid in *Legs*. Don't be fooled by the jacket cover's nostalgic tinge. Kennedy has looked to the compost of the past not to escape the present, nor to establish a preconceived thesis, but to talk about one of the sources for our own days. Legs was one of the Big Boys of the American compost. We can thank Kennedy's green thumb that we have him alive again.

W. T. Lhamon, Jr.

W. T. Lhamon teaches English at Florida State University, Tallahassee.

Moise and the World of Reason by Tennessee Williams

(Simon and Schuster; $6.95)

Though it is billed as a novel, Tennessee Williams' new book reads more like a series of notebook entries in which the author muses at random on art and sex. Williams is the most intensely personal of writers; his compulsively voluble narrator clearly speaks to us in Williams' own palpitating voice. *Moise and the World of Reason* is a portrait of the author as a sensual young man, "a distinguished failed writer" at 30. Obsessed with his past, his sexual desires and his rejection slips, the narrator uses his diary jottings as a defense against emptiness. His desk is the center of his world; his writing imposes order and dignity on the experiences of a sometimes shabby life. Art heals, and the book records the process of the writer's salvation through the patterned arrangement of words on a page.

Since it has no real story or tangible dramatic conflict, the novel is designed to show off its narrator's sensibility—Williams attempts to hold us with the

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fractured, fevered ruminations of a character who nakedly enacts his own fears of failure and isolation. On a long, dark night of the soul, after he's been abandoned at a party by his current lover, the narrator returns to his hovel to scribble and to reflect; and we're regaled with a free-form kaleidoscopic sampling of what's on his mind. Characters, anecdotes, images from the author's past compete for our attention. Williams, of course, is an exuberant, though inconsistent master of ceremonies, and the quality of the remembered moments varies. Some are tantalizing, while others seem like pale carbon copies of past routines. A vivid caricature of a voracious woman called the Actress Invicta is in Williams' florid, Rabelaisian grand manner; but a scene between the narrator and his conservative Southern mother, who is shocked by her son's bohemian ways, is shrill, mechanical.

As always, Williams is a poet of sexual longing; and the most lyrical of the memories involve the writer and his first lover Lance, a black ice-skater with an ideal physique and a generous, yielding spirit. An experience that the narrator recalls from childhood has the haunting quality of his novella, "The Knightly Quest," in which Williams treats sexual cruising with ritualistic decorum. The incident here concerns the sudden appearance in the author's small Southern hometown of four elegant young men who entice boys into their car; to the narrator, the crusaders seem doomed, their compulsive sexuality a prefiguring of early death.

Typically Williams' attitude to sex is dense and contradictory as he sees it as both holy and infected, transcendent and tainted. Lance is a Williams stud like Chance Wayne and Stanley Kowalski who offers ecstatic release. Yet throughout these reminiscences sex is also sinister, as in the bizarre passage in which the young writer meets and feels threatened by a once-famous playwright who tries to entice him to go on a long journey. The crumbling playwright, so patently an embittered self-portrait, uses sex as magic but also as punishment. Williams therefore remains a reluctant Dionysian, a guilt-ridden reveler; and for this Southern puritan, sex still promises catastrophe.

The novel is Williams' true confession. He has never before written so unguardedly about himself. The narrator is openly, at times even joyously, homosexual; sexual desire isn't disguised here as it was in many of the plays. But Williams is one of those writers for whom telling all may have a therapeutic effect on his spirit but a dampening result on his art. Written before gay liberation, his major plays required distance from and transformation of his actual experience. Williams benefited from the pressures of social convention. On one level *A Streetcar Named Desire* is a homosexual fantasy with Blanche as an effeminate male masked as a magnificently neurotic Southern belle; but American drama can be glad that Williams didn't write Blanche as a man! In terms of sexual candor, *Moise and the World of Reason* is Williams' most liberated statement, and yet it has little of the surging erotic comedy of the great plays.

Williams has always been a self-conscious writer. Here he shares with us his design for his own book and he lets us know that he's aware of his eccentricities—his fondness for ending sentences in mid-air, his pleasure in repeating words, phrases and images, his almost impish delight in inverting normal word order.

This, then, is a novel about art and the artist, and the title character Moise represents Williams' version of a saintly creator. Like the hero of "In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel," Moise is exhausted by the ecstasy of creation as she resigns from "the world of reason" by barricading herself behind "a circle of magic." At the end, the narrator moves in with Moise, and these two haunted artists crouch behind closed doors like the fragile brother and sister in "Out Cry."

For all its ornery formlessness, its stylistic self-indulgence, its avoidance of high drama, the book has genuine rewards, descriptive passages that remind us of Williams' special lyrical gifts and his distinctive personality, evocation of downtown New York at night conveying the macabre isolation of an Edward Hopper painting. Even when the narrative voice is whining or out of control, even when it is lazy and repetitive, it is still, manifestly, the voice of America's greatest playwright. There is bristling wit here, and charm, and temperament.

Foster Hirsch

Foster Hirsch is a free-lance writer and teacher of drama at Brooklyn College.

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The Boat
by Lothar-Günther Buchheim

(Knopf; $10)

Somehow it comes as a surprise that the German navy during World War II was made up of real people, people who complained about their leaders, drank, whored, loved and died. Somehow the other side, the "enemy," was both subhuman and superhuman—the methodical, cold impersonal German military robots. This novel, "but not a work of fiction," by Buchheim, who served on German minesweepers, destroyers and submarines and who like his principal character was a naval correspondent, describes the human, gritty side of a German U-boat crew on a long, at times boring and at times terrifying patrol in the Atlantic traveling over 14,000 miles in the fall and winter of 1941. He has written a memorable story of the power of the sea and of the horror of submarine warfare for the hunter and the hunted, whose roles change with dramatic suddenness.

Despite the popular image of the invincibility of the U-boat—the "wolf packs"—one is instantly struck by the fragility and vulnerability of this small craft. Prenuclear submarines were really surface boats that submerged only when frightened or on the attack. Their diesels ran only on the surface, where the boat was in danger of sudden aircraft attacks and of light gray destroyers unexpectedly appearing from a low fog bank. The submarine could run on its batteries only for about 80 miles at a maximum speed of seven knots. If still pursued, it was forced to lie quietly on the bottom, hoping for the best.

German technology too comes off a poor second to the British in the matter of underwater detection. The Germans relied on sonar, an acoustic system, while the British used the electronic "Asdic," which could locate submarines with more accuracy and ease. This made the task of escaping surface pursuit, once detected, difficult indeed. The U-boat maneuvered frantically below, the captain trying to outguess and mislead the destroyer, the crew glistening with fear and sweat. "Any moment and it'll be time again—the destroyer will have completed its circles. The pack of hounds has to grant us this brief respite whether they want to or not. There's the Asdic again. Two or three rattles of pebbles. A cold hand creeps under my collar and runs down my back. I shudder."

The tension in the book arises from the intrinsic danger of the patrol mission, its almost aimless character, a single boat in the vast Atlantic on a fixed course, coming across victims, more by accident than design. And now that we know that the Allies were reading German code, and thus knew the comings and goings and locations of the German U-boats, it is even more remarkable that they were the peril to shipping that they were. The account of their pursuit underwater by depth charges, going on as it does for page after page, is an almost unbearable reading experience. One becomes a member of the crew. The depth charges shake the boat with the ferocity of a dog attacking his bone. The blasts fling the steel floor plates into the air, smash the crockery, force leaks along the propeller shafts, cast the boat into complete darkness. "Water transmits pressure much more strongly than air. If an intense pressure wave hits a boat, it rips it apart at the seams. To destroy a submerged U-boat, depth charges don't have to hit it; they need only explode within the so-called lethal range"—about 275 to 350 feet.

In addition to warfare there are the elements. An account of a severe storm in the Atlantic provides extraordinarily vivid perceptions of the waves and currents and colors of the water—beer bottle green, four stories high. "We stare at the gigantic wave that is approaching us with unearthly deliberation, heavy as lead, slowed down by its own monstrous bulk. On its back foam glints wickedly. The nearer it comes, the more it swells, rising higher and again higher above the gray-green tumult. Suddenly the wind ceases. Little waves splash aimlessly around the boat. Then it dawns on me: This father of all waves has thrown up a great barrier against the storm. We are in its lee against the wind."

It is inevitable that his description of the oceans will be compared to Conrad's, for example, but Buchheim's prose (with the superb English translation by Denver and Helen Lindley) stands on its own merit for sheer descriptive power. Toward the end there is a disingenuous and unnecessary espionage plot that is not fully developed and leads nowhere. The U-boat has enough problems with the British, the Asdic and comprised codes without having to fret about Mata Hari. The excitement of the hunt, the chase and the ocean is more than enough to satisfy the most cynical armchair adventurer, and lifts this novel out of the trough of commonplace war stories.

Robert J. Myers

The Bottle Factory Outing
by Beryl Bainbridge

(George Braziller; $7.95)

Amazon One
by M.F. Beal

(Atlantic/Little, Brown; $7.95)

Early in Beryl Bainbridge's newest teaser, Freda, a plucky young woman with a yearning heart, has her fortune read in the tea leaves by Maria, an old Italian co-worker. There is a tall man in her future; there are men in uniform, galloping horses, a white dress, flowers, the weeping and wailing of a funeral procession, a journey by land and sea. All of this, of course, comes to pass. Every detail Bainbridge plants takes root and eventually ripens in the fullness of time: she is an economical, attentive writer who nurtures her work like a loving gardener.

Freda is blinded by her own fantasies. The prediction may be accurate, but accuracy and reality, in this novel, are poles apart. The tall man seeks to escape her clutches, the white dress is no bridal gown, and the journey by sea is more bizarre and perversely comical than even the outspoken Freda could have imagined. The prophecy is fulfilled through the jarring collusion of the inevitable and the accidental, that symbiotic pair Bainbridge has been patiently exploring in all her books, and which is the distinctive unifying theme of her work.

In this firmly controlled, funny and frightening tale, two lonely young women in need of money and sensation take jobs in a wine-bottling plant owned by the reactionary, paternalistic, godlike Paganotti, who never appears. (Though there is a good deal of Catholic imagery in the novel, the prevailing tone is indeed pagan.) Their fellow workers

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are Italian immigrants, chosen people plucked by Paganotti from their homeland to enjoy the dubious benefits of British urban life. Freda, the ripe blonde 200-pound leader of the couple, makes friends with everyone, dazzling the Italians by sheer bulk and enthusiasm, and drags her absurdly meek, reasonable, scraggly friend Brenda in her wake. Brenda, a painful example of English self-restraint and good breeding, cannot refuse the erotic probings of the manager Rossi's randy fingers foraging among the shredded newspaper she wears under her clothes for warmth: she has a horror of seeming impolite. Freda, meanwhile, lusts after Vittorio, nephew to Paganotti and godlike by reflection, and plots seduction by means of steak, garlic and oil salad dressing, filmy negligées and wistful smiles.

The plot is simple. Freda organizes a Sunday picnic for the workers. Unsurprisingly, the morning is windy, the chartered bus fails to appear, the substitute cars lose each other. The best-laid plans are upset by the irrational tactics of ordinary life. Instead of the planned Stately Home visit, the party winds up at Windsor Castle, uncertain whether the Queen is in residence. After a confused tour, some half-hearted football, a bit of abortive necking in the bushes, death insidiously sneaks into the party, as death has a habit of doing in Bainbridge's novels. The mystery of how and why is never satisfactorily resolved; we may or may not be told the truth, and it hardly matters. The immediate concern becomes the body to be disposed of: a bottling factory affords unexpected resources, which is all I will say.

Several ingredients from two earlier Bainbridge novels, *Harriet Said* and *The Secret Glass*, reappear in *The Bottle Factory Outing*. In each there is death from an assault; while the assault, naturally, is intended, the death is a circumstantial fluke. In *The Secret Glass*, too, the characters are preoccupied with getting rid of a corpse (eventually sewn into a chenille curtain). These deaths are problematic; by standards of verisimilitude they seem sensational and unlikely. Yet without them the novels would lose all meaning, and besides, standards of verisimilitude do not seem appropriate in evaluating Bainbridge's work. Above all, death is a hovering presence, disturbingly erratic in his choice of victim, time and place. The survivors, coping with the aftermath, oscillate between cosmic awe and the nonchalance of veteran streetcleaners.

The Bottle Factory Outing, like the earlier books, centers on a pair of women (adolescents in *Harriet Said*) opposite in nature, living in strained, tenuous yet complementary unity. They share life's daily intimacies and larger goals, but their means and styles are grossly dissimilar. Like pairs of magnets endlessly rotated, they attract and repel each other in turn. One is thoughtful, withdrawn, ascetic, the other sensual, blowsy and overweight. One is irritatingly reasonable, the other outlandishly romantic. Freda, like Rita before her in *The Secret Glass*, has the imaginative power to invent an elaborate love affair when in fact reality has given her precious little to build on. "They had quite violent arguments and a lot of the time he spoke to her harshly, but she took it as a good sign, as love was very close to hate." Or:

> *In the summer, staying at his parents' castle outside Bologna, she would open the shutters in the morning to let in the sun and shield her eyes from the blue surge of the sea sparkling beyond the dusty line of the olive trees that his father owned.*

The immense creative will that informs these wild imaginings makes Freda awesome rather than pathetic. But whatever the actual or dreamed erotic entanglements, the essential bond is between the female pair. From this strife-ridden, often destructive yet powerful relationship flows the energy of the story.

Although the setting is London, it is the young English women who seem transplanted, out of place. The Italians, with their strong community of families living together, their language, shared silences and gestures full of meaning, are far more at peace in the world. At least once before, Bainbridge has used emissaries from an intrusive, reputedly more sensual culture (Americans, in *The Secret Glass*) to hint at some vague gap in the standard British arsenal for dealing with life. It almost appears that the mothers or nannies, in their training, omitted an essential piece of information. What it is would be difficult to specify, but its absence is glaring.

Quite drily, she takes pokes at rather obvious national foibles. Of Rossi she writes: "How he had longed for this moment, this day to begin, driving into the countryside unaccompanied by his wife, as if he was an Englishman." And of poor Brenda:

> *Though she lacked imagination, Brenda would go to any lengths rather than cause herself embarrassment. It was her upbringing. As a child she had been taught it was rude to say no, unless she didn't mean it. If she was offered another piece of cake and she wanted it she was obliged to refuse out of politeness. And if she didn't want it she had to say yes, even if it choked her. It was involved but understandable.*

The close of the novel focuses on Brenda and takes on her tone, which is self-tormented. Unchanged by experience, she seeks only retreat from a world that persistently demands what she cannot give: an unfettered response.

This is a wry comic novel of poses and play-acting, the essentials of all comedy. One will remember the characters in extreme gestures of self-parody, like *commedia dell-arte* standbys—the courteous, compliant Latin lover, the red-faced brawling Irish truck driver. And the outing's climax, a bus ride through a safari park (British version of our jungle habitats) is a deftly written travesty: the lions and tigers are oddly dormant, while a dead body waits in the back seat of the parked car. Daily reality seems to be a ludicrous game all agree to play, while far beneath the surface the obscure rumblings of life and death continue, careless and inescapable.

To my mind Bainbridge is not writing thrillers or pseudo-thrillers, as some critics have suggested. Rather she is writing quests. So far, she is asking far more questions than she answers; in our dogmatic age of assertion, this is refreshing.

Certain books claim our attention by the careful documentation of what life is like, in its suffering, physical dailiness, for groups of people about whom we would otherwise remain ignorant. *Amazon One* attempts to do this for young women underground radicals, living in scattered bunches, united by a cause, sharing a secret network of connections, phone numbers and meeting places, forever hunted, forever in exile in their own land. Their hardships, unlike those of the poor or dispossessed, are chosen, presumably in the name of an ideal. Every reader's politics will inevitably influence the extent of his sympathy.

For the facts and the feeling of accuracy, M.F. Beal is to be thanked. She knows what she's talking about, and what she knows is worth telling. Life in

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the movement probably was and may still be as Beal claims, but artistic truth is quite another matter. Though the novel is supremely well intentioned, it lacks James' "sense of felt life" to illuminate the data of experience.

The story opens with Kam, short for Kamikazee (*sic*—her real name is Heritage) surreptitiously spraying a message on the wall of a bank in the Bay Area. Kam is part of a group of six—three men and three women—sharing a house in Berkeley and a goal: to destroy the evil American system by "kidnapping buildings" rather than people, with delayed action bombs. When their house is blown up on April Fools' Day, the women are unharmed. Two of the men are killed, and the third disappears. Beal traces simultaneously the separate, haunted wandering of each of the survivors. It becomes clear to Kam who the traitor, the infiltrator, is. During the following month (the time span of the novel) she nurtures her strength, hunts him down, and at a May Day rally, takes her revenge.

The narrative is preceded by an ingenious series of made-up documents, newspaper reports, etc. It closes with a catalogue of "what happened to" nearly two dozen characters. What happened is largely ironic. Some are dead, one is in jail, a few have retreated out of the country or to cabins in the woods. Little change has come of their passion.

Why the title? Beal's characters are forging their way largely without the aid of men, with new patterns of friendship and loving. Many of the firmest links in the underground chain that enables them to travel are women. The male characters here are subsidiary, tangential to the progress, the way women characters used to be in older novels of heroism and adventure. In that sense the book's feminism is inherent in the form, subtler and less strident than its politics.

In light of the activities of Weatherman and, more recently, of the Symbionese Liberation Army, *Amazon One* is uncanny and timely. And in contrast with the polemical public statements of these groups, it is responsible. Beal is fair and sympathetic, though infinitely wiser, I suspect, than she allows any of her characters to be. Her radicals seem dismally unaware, not of political or social reality, but of that more vital area of pain and frustration where the private and public lives of ordinary people intersect.

A novel of this sort is bound to be controversial. It is unfortunate that a good deal of the controversy will doubtless arise out of *Amazon One's* own inconsistencies and confusions than over the issue itself.

Lynne Sharon Schwartz

Lynne Sharon Schwartz is a free-lance writer who has just completed her first novel.

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News Business

Stop The Presses, I Want To Get Off!
edited by Richard Pollak

(Random House: $8.95)

When Mollie Malloy turns to Hildy Johnson in Howard Hawks' *His Girl Friday* (1940) and, pointing to reporters, spits out: "They're not human," Hildy replies breezily: "Of course not, they're newspapermen." That exchange reflected popular attitudes toward the press and its parasitism that have been partially revised in the intervening years, thanks to the renaissance in hard investigative reporting and an audacious new journalism that has enlarged the terrain of news coverage. We are now experiencing in print media (and to a lesser extent electronic) the gradual obsolescence of "objectivity" and arm's-length journalism. The once serviceable "official" truths now look banal and downright self-delusive; nothing seems quite so opinionated as the "facts."

Although recent political events themselves have conspired to enlighten journalists, some credit for the awakening of intelligence in the media must go to the still relatively obscure genre of press criticism. Instrumental in exposing what transpires behind headlines and TV newscasts, in exposing precisely how news is made and how it is neglected, has been [*More*], a New York based journalism review co-founded in 1971 by Richard Pollak (formerly of *Newsweek*), J. Anthony Lukas (formerly of *The New York Times*), and Bill Woodward (formerly of *The New York Post*). In the past few years I have regularly read this publication along with the older *Columbia Journalism Review* and the *Chicago Journalism Review;* although none of them has yet found a substantial audience outside of people who toil in the media, they clearly deserve a wider readership consisting of all who are serious consumers of news. Not to supplement one's news diet with a perusal of journalism reviews, in a time when even our most respected daily papers still dutifully quote lies instead of unmasking them, is no more prudent than sitting down in a strange restaurant to eat dinner without knowing what the dish is made from, or which chef prepared it. Unfortunately people do both of these things all the time.

Random House has consented to bring out a very lively anthology of

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[*More*] pieces; virtually every one of them reminds us, in the words of A.J. Liebling (after whom [*More*] has named its highly successful counter-conventions), that "freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one."

The posture of these articles is one of tutored irreverence and more than a few venerable institutions and individuals are brought to their knees. *The New York Times* financial page is taken to task by Chris Welles, the political schizophrenia of *The Wall Street Journal* amply diagnosed by former *WSJ* reporter A. Ken MacDougall, and the provincialism of the Pulitzer prize process patiently exposed by John McCormally, who once won one himself. J. Anthony Lukas, who is liberally represented here with four pieces, devotes one of them to an affectionate but unsparing critique of James Reston, a columnist with a usually unexamined weakness for men in power. The editors of [*More*], however, are not parsimonious with praise and the collection includes attentive profiles on *New York Times* Vietnam correspondent Neil Sheehan, Hunter Thompson and his adrenalin pen, A.J. Liebling, and even a paean to *The New Yorker* checking department.

In a piece published last October in *The New York Times* magazine called "The Last Article," novelist Mark Harris advanced the argument that what we need is freedom *from* the press; Harris, who scrupulously avoids newspapers, replied to a friend who asked him how he knew of Watergate: "C'mon, Leonard, a man or a woman of instinct knows about Watergate from history, from literature." His thesis, that we should stop wasting our time with "news" that bears only the faintest resemblance to that cognitive and emotional complexity that goes by the name of truth, is seductive but probably too sophisticated a piece of advice for most to follow. [*More*], which regularly participates in this disparagement of the mass media machine, not least by publishing a list of the country's 10 worst dailies, encourages not total abstinence, but a far more critical and leery attitude toward the news, and for this we should be grateful.

In a business where cronyism, lassitude, cowardice and advertising departments continually dull the sharp edge of integrity with which reporters are customarily expected to cut their way through a forest of trivia and prevarication, [*More*] publishes articles that owe nothing to nobody. It has remained well written, well edited, original and immediate, simultaneously performing remarkable feats of demystification. True, some of what appears in [*More*] is high-level trade gossip, a form of cronyism of its own, but the rest is straight dope and if you can't find the strength to give up all newspapers, at least add this journal to the list of ones you do read.

R.D. Rosen

R.D. Rosen is book editor and columnist for *The Boston Phoenix*.

Big Impeachment Movie

How the Good Guys Finally Won by Jimmy Breslin

(Viking; $6.95)

Some writers have a keen sense of turf. They have set down roots. They write best about what they know and have grown up knowing about their particular piece of the country. Jimmy Breslin proves the point with his new book on Watergate. Just pick it up, heft it in your hand, and already you *know* something's wrong. It lacks something in weight, bulk, number of pages. Still, you open it up and start reading and the first section on the jury returning the guilty verdicts on Mitchell, Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Mardian is just great. Evocative, vivid, precisely detailed, it's where a book like this should start, I guess, because if not quite the climax of the story, it's pretty close to the end of it.

But then, when we expect Breslin to step back and launch into the real substance of the book, he never really does. Instead, he gives us more scenes, more quick-sketch profiles, more anecdotes, with nothing in between, so that we begin to see that he's not kidding when he subtitles his book "Notes on an Impeachment Summer."

How the Good Guys Finally Won is a kind of 190-page mood piece on the impeachment—not so much on the how of it, and certainly not on the why of it, but more on the *who* of it. But the *dramatis personae* is strictly Breslin's own. Don't look in here if you're expecting to find out even the names of the members of the House Judiciary Committee, much less how they voted, but if you want to find out the name of the man who runs the lunch counter in the Democratic cloakroom, then this is the place all right.

Or take that back. *How the Good Guys Finally Won* isn't so much a mood piece as it is a narrative treatment for that big impeachment movie they might some day get around to making. It's like a movie. Everything in it is presented in personal, dramatic terms; every conflict is resolved at that level. But of course that's not really the way it worked. The wheels ground slowly; the bitterest adversaries never met face to face; the deadliest weapon with which anyone was threatened was a subpoena. But

"A superb novel—expansive, vibrant and profoundly comic" (THE LONDON TIMES)
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none of that is dramatic—or nearly dramatic enough.

So Breslin made a movie of it, a *Last Hurrah* for the old ward-style politicians. And who is the hero of his movie? Not Leon Jaworski, but the Irishest of all the players listed in the program, Democratic majority leader Thomas "Tip" O'Neill:

> *But for O'Neill, there was no way he could not be a lifetime politician. . . . For good politicians, real politicians, are not created in law school or in bank vaults. They are born, as their fathers were born, and the father of the father before them, and then back through the ages, with this viral container of public life in the genes. Just as the ability to play a piano in concert or to write a lasting novel is present at birth.*

Bet you didn't know it was such an exalted calling, did you?

I'm not minimizing the role played by the Democratic leadership in the House. I'm sure O'Neill was right there, working tirelessly behind the scenes, just as Breslin says he was. But to suggest that politics was what saved America during that impeachment summer is to miss the essential point of Watergate and its aftermath: that the rule of law is what must prevail. Not politics.

How is it Breslin puts it? "There is no way to understand what went on in Washington in the summer of 1974 unless you realize that what happened was because of politicians." Well, that cuts two ways, because what happened in the summer of 1974 wouldn't have been necessary *except* for politicians. Doesn't Jimmy Breslin know that Richard Nixon was just doing to the country what that old master of ward politics Richard Daley has been doing to the city of Chicago for the past 20 years?

Bruce Cook

Bruce Cook is staff writer on film and music for *The National Observer*.

The Vietnam Summing Up

The New Republic of May 3, 1975, with its starkly evocative cover of Goya on "the disasters of war," brought together the reflections of the wisest critics of the Vietnam adventure.

Harold R. Isaacs, Kevin Buckley, Frances FitzGerald, Stanley Karnow, Richard Holbrooke, Chester L. Cooper, George McT. Kahin, Adam Yarmolinsky, Stanley Hoffmann, Anthony Lewis, Hans Morgenthau, Ronald Steel, James Chace, Dong Duc Khoi, and **Gerald Hickey.**

These final essays are in themselves significant postscripts to history. If you would like copies of this special May 3 issue for yourself or a friend, for a child, or a student, please send in the coupon below. You will value this issue as long as we have reason to remember the past.

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Roger Rosenblatt on television

All in the Family

In this episode of "All in the Family" Edith has sent in a box top that allows her to receive a 25-cent rebate from the manufacturers of the product. Because of a mistake in the company's computer, quarters keep coming by the daily mail. Eventually Edith amasses close to $50 in quarters, despite her protests to the company. She and the children want to return the money. Archie, naturally, wants to keep it. The son-in-law, Mike, tries to phone the company long distance in Buffalo. The company's automatic answering service fails like the computer. Mike rants against the machine age. Archie praises the age.

Edith then receives a sum of money as a death benefit for Archie from the Veterans' Administration. Another machine has failed. Now Archie berates technology while the children taunt him. They suggest that Archie may in fact be dead, and remind him of television's "Twilight Zone." Archie is visibly shaken, particularly by the appearance at the door of the neighborhood undertaker Mr. Whitehead, a mousy man whose great shock of white hair provides the best visual joke of the show. Mr. Whitehead, too, has his technology, and suggests a coffin for Archie with an electric light under the lid. He also suggests the epitaph, "peace with honor."

The Bunkers call at the Veterans' Administration building. Their interview begins with the VA man asking where Archie is buried. The situation is corrected when the VA man discovers an extra puncture in Archie's IBM card. He explains, "every little hole has a meaning all its own." Archie complains that there is no more respect for human dignity, but is relieved to learn that he is alive again. The episode ends on the presumption that he is right.

Death and the Bunkers have been close to each other since the series started. In one story Archie, inadvertently locked in his own basement, drinks himself into a stupor, and believes that he has either crossed the Jordan or the Styx. In another he dreams that he is old

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and dying, rejected by his children. A few weeks ago he was just missed by a falling crate of machine parts, and temporarily became devout in response to his near tragedy. Archie has epiphanies about death and takes it seriously, as he ought to, because in many ways death is the emblem of his life.

His life occupies a situation comedy, one that remains static from week to week. This type of comedy has no plot; plot is progressive and needs causes for events. Situation is committed to sameness. Plot is connected to growth of character, even when opposed to character as in myth. Situation takes character for granted, and will brook no changes, except when someone "steps out of character" for a joke on himself. Like the comedy of humors, situation presumes that exaggerated consistency is funny. We have no feelings for the people involved, which is the basis of our laughter—even at an episode on death, which is another kind of exaggerated consistency.

Comedy and death are old companions, as Yorick demonstrated, not merely in graveyard and funeral jokes, but in substance. Both are forms of interruption. Both have social stature, and command absolute attention. Neither is fully comprehensible to us, in cause or meaning. Both are forms of criticism and reality, shattering pretense, showing people for what they are. To make a joke of something is to kill it. The terms of comedy are the terms of death: you're a riot, a scream; you break me up; you're killing me.

These terms have a special companionship in "All in the Family" because "All in the Family" was dead on arrival. We knew from the outset that the four main characters always would be impervious to change, that in their particular comedy of humors Edith would shuttle between Bewilderment and Right Instinct, and that the children would play Young Generation forever, permanently settled into lip-service liberalism and the latest freedom vernacular, their every reaction more predictable than Archie assaults. On the surface Archie's humor seems more variable. At times he appears as Hate, Stubbornness, Selfishness or Cowardice, but all of these group under the presiding humor of Death itself, which governs every form of immovability, in Archie and his kin.

Despite the formal stagnation of their lives, the Bunkers reappear every week as if reborn for the week's occasions. They do not learn from past mistakes. They repeat old jokes and epithets. None seems to have much of a memory for former events which might guide their present decisions. Every Saturday they feign surprise to discover how the other thinks, from which surprise, in part, derives our laughter.

By blocking out the past, of course, they block out the future. This sustains them as comedians, like a running gag, but is no joke. In these people we read a jumble of traditional issues such as man versus machine, which they regularly set before us like a buffet chef run amuck. At the same time, by their own behavior, they intimate that life is always to be treated as new business. In the tension between memory and desire lie the Bunkers. Their false innocence intensifies the staleness of their experience. Even the laughter coming "live from Television City in Hollywood" sounds canned.

But the Bunkers do not live in the present, either. Instead of a state of time, they live in a state of mind, specifically Archie's. When the week's problem is announced, the humors gather 'round to offer different perspectives on, for example: What is the meaning of individual honesty in a mechanized world where machines can cheat and be cheated? What are the meanings of death and truth in such a world? These questions appear to be up for grabs, but they are in Archie's control from the start, control that is manifested by childishness and panic. Because Archie always represents the worst response to problems, he bears the focus for possible solutions. Because no solutions are ever offered or desired on "All in the Family" Archie also always wins the day.

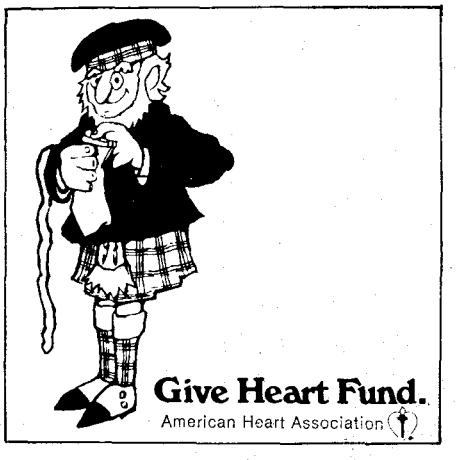
This is the death that the program promotes: the death of motion and enlargement of spirit. Archie's comic consistency is nothing as clean as Avarice or Lust, nothing one can point one's finger to and say "ridiculous." Rather, it is the consistency of serious issues deliberately raised and left to die, the incubator dead rolled from living room to kitchen in a Queens house lined up against its identical neighbor like the vast Queens cemeteries. Archie is Joyce's Mr. Browne, who is everywhere. The death he carries is our amusement at his triumphs.

Is "All in the Family" funny? Sometimes. When Archie reports that the machine parts missed him when he leaned forward to salt his egg, because God's "verse" told him "you need salt on that egg," that is funny. When later in that episode the toilet cover drops on Archie's foot and Mike claims that "God's aim is getting better," that too is funny, at least the way Reiner and O'Connor handle it. But the fun is piecemeal, not connected to a fluid life. It is meant to interfere between surprise and understanding, and then to boing like an overwound watchspring so that once laughing we must start at zero again, and rebuild the situation. Accordingly the laugh we give the Bunkers is disembodied, the laugh laughing not at them but at itself.

Comedy, like death, must embrace the whole life, if it works. It may deny change, but must also acknowledge the possibility of change, of past and future, thereby in its denials suggesting a moral base. The comedy of the Bunkers, which is not of the whole life, which is the blurtings of topical and toilet jokes, rapid fire, scattergun, automatic, depending on our habitual courtesy to laugh at familiar things—this comedy is of a different death, a death where life never was. There is nothing intense and nothing to care for. The family are bunkers against our caring.

The final episode of "All in the Family" might pay respects to its intent. Archie could choke yelling Dingbat and collapse in a heap. Edith could go immediately afterward, tripped by a chicken leg. The children could be hit by a sound truck for Cesar Chavez while running for help. Ding-a-ling. Bang. Gone. Then all come forward and take a bow: first Mike, then Gloria, then Edith. We go wild with applause, and stand up shouting as Archie's head fills the screen, big as life, handsome old baby face, scrubbed to a glow and ready to meet his maker. A spotlight traces the skull beneath the skin. How *do* you like your blue-eyed boy, Mr. Death?

Roger Rosenblatt is director of educational programs, National Endowment for the Humanities, and author of *Black Fiction* (Harvard University Press).



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Correspondence

Procter & Gamble on Sure

To the editors:

We regret that no effort was made to confirm with us the scientific data referred to in Joseph Page's article on antiperspirants ("Not So Sure," *TNR*, April 12).

In it Mr. Page referred to animal testing run in 1973 by the Gillette Company on two of their products and one of ours. According to Page, "Gillette had also tested Sure [the P&G brand] and found lung irritation in monkeys . . ."

Mr. Page's assertion simply is not true. The Gillette test on Sure showed no adverse effects for our products. This was the opinion not only of independent consulting pathologists retained by Procter & Gamble to review the slides of animal tissue, but also of Food and Drug Administration pathologists who concluded in a memorandum dated December 27, 1973, that "a health hazard cannot be ascribed to these products."

We should also point out that no adverse effects with Sure have been seen in any tests we know of, including our own 90-day inhalation studies on monkeys and guinea pigs. The Food and Drug Administration reviewed the data from the P&G animal studies and advised us on February 21, 1974, that based on their independent evaluation "we cannot anticipate that there is a potential human health hazard involved with exposure to Sure."

In summary, there has been no evidence of a human health hazard resulting from the use of our products, and concerns about their safety are pure speculation not supported by any scientific evidence. Thus we continue to believe that Procter & Gamble has acted responsibly in the marketing of Sure and Secret aerosol antiperspirants.

K. R. Ericson, Director
Toilet Goods Product
Development Division
The Procter & Gamble Company

In reply:

Mr. Ericson takes my words out of context. I suggest he reread the entire sentence from which he excerpts.

FDA did later conclude that tests first interpreted to show lung problems in monkeys did not in fact prove a health hazard to monkeys from Sure or to humans from either the P&G or the Gillette sprays. But they did trigger an alert leading to the discovery of other signs that zirconium aerosols were suspect, such as: 1) reports of skin granulomas caused by nonaerosol zirconium deodorants (creating a fear that inhaled zirconium could cause fibrotic lung disease which is usually fatal); 2) studies showing zirconium deposited in the lungs remains there a long time; 3) adverse-reaction reports from Sure and Secret users, including complaints of severe rashes, boils, carbuncles and burns, many of which required steroid and antibiotic therapy; and 4) the fact that up to November 1974, about 15 percent of these complaints mentioned choking, coughing and respiratory distress.

By insisting there is no evidence of a health hazard from Sure, Mr. Ericson ignores the real issue. A company planning to market something people will breathe into their lungs every day should bear a continuing burden of proving its product is reasonably safe. Weighing the benefits of zirconium antiperspirants against risks, an independent panel of experts has found that P&G has not met this burden.

Joseph A. Page

Survivor's View

To the editors:

In writing against capital punishment ("Give 'em Death?" *TNR*, April 19), you take the side associated with compassion. Yet you apparently think of death as the kind of abstraction that permitted US pilots to fly bombing missions in Vietnam as technicians. You say, "Execution has typically been the fate not of the notorious, but the impoverished nonentity whose offense is scarcely remembered, much less with revulsion, by the time sentence is carried out." I think you speak from failure to look inside the homes of the victims' survivors.

My son, who was born in December 1953, lived 15 years and 29 days. He was shot while walking in front of the high school in our neighborhood. Four young men passing in a car ordered him to stop and hand over the coat he was wearing. He ran from them. He was shot in the back as he ran in his heavy boots on a slick icy road in January 1969. The offense is remembered not just with revulsion, but with an ache, not just on days when events like funerals and holidays bring families together. But every day.

I have looked out into classes I teach and suddenly had the feeling that the young man in the second row looks like my son. And I stop whatever thought I was framing, draw back from that cold January street, and go on.

I go to the cemetery, my wife goes to the cemetery, and we stand, and we think of what might have been.

The physician who examined him for football turnout at his junior high school in 1968 said he was going to be tall. His big ankles showed that. I sit now at a desk where I used to talk to him about school. Here I could listen to him as he practiced the piano in the basement. I draw my thoughts away from him in order to take care of other matters. Every day, wherever I am, at home, walking in my neighborhood, driving, I see him as he was, think of him as he would be, and wish I had been given a choice on January 17, 1969, a choice of giving as ransom my property and my job, if only I could have been allowed to save him.

Traice Walters is remembered. The tears of my wife and my daughter today come from hurt that goes on and on.

Denzil Walters
Seattle, Washington

War as Economic Buoy

To the editors:

Your issue "On the Disasters of the Indochina War" (May 3) misses one point. Much is made of the United States' contribution of $150 billion to the debacle. We did not give this to the Indochinese; it was a gift to ourselves. This money ensured profits to business and provided jobs for labor. It helped guarantee an almost bottomless market for our productive output. It made it possible for a decaying economic system to stay alive a little longer.

Ever since the "Dirty '30s," the system has been buoyed by hot and cold wars. Its days are numbered. The alternative is technocracy.

John Sheldon
Savannah, Ohio

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Amnesty Planks

To the editors:

Not having read *TV and National Defense*, I was not aware until I saw Walter Pincus' article (*TNR*, April 5) that I had been credited with a "C viewpoint" for simply having reported that the Democratic platform in 1972 advocated postwar amnesty.

What I cannot make out is whether that was offset by my report on the CBS Evening News of August 18, 1972, on the *Republican* platform, which said, in part:

". . . On amnesty, the [platform] committee was tougher than the administration. It rejected recommended language saying, 'Not until after the war is over and imprisoned men safely home should consideration be given to granting amnesty to those who fled.' Which means that, unlike the Democratic platform, which favors postwar amnesty, the Republican platform won't consider amnesty at all."

Daniel Schorr
CBS News

Russia and the Mideast

To the editors:

Stanley Karnow's "Russia's Middle East Zigzags" (*TNR*, April 5) is positively byzantine in its thesis and wholly unbelievable. A far simpler and more persuasive account may be offered. There is hardly any question whether Russia wants to contribute to the stability of the region. The answer here, as everywhere else, is an emphatic negative. The only exceptions are those areas, such as eastern Europe, wholly under Russian domination. Their whole policy worldwide is to create instability and chaos, where they can do so through surrogates and at little cost to themselves. Their support goes to the most destabilizing forces, hence their heavy support of Syria.

No one can quarrel with Mr. Karnow's statement that the Russians cannot be excluded from a future settlement. To suggest, however, that they will play a constructive role is to completely ignore their all too recent actions in the area.

Happily, I agree with Mr. Karnow on one point. The Russians' interest in the Middle East is the same under Brezhnev as under the czars. It was not stabilizing in the 19th century, nor is it now. Imperialism pursues the same goals whether it professes the cause of holy Russia or waves the bloody emblem of communism.

To imply as Mr. Karnow does that the Soviets could join with the US "to guarantee peace in the Middle East" is a fashionable position in this country today. It is either incredibly naive and assumes that the Russians do indeed have a genuine interest in peace and stability or the most arrant knavery and a prelude to the abandonment of Israel to the tender mercies of Assad, Arafat and their patron Brezhnev.

A final culminating bit of innocence is Mr. Karnow's conclusion "that neither can win a decisive victory nor suffer a decisive defeat." We know full well from the experiences of 1957, 1967 and 1973 that the Soviet Union will not permit a decisive defeat of the Arabs nor a decisive victory by the Israelis. The US handed the Soviets' clients their proclaimed "victories" in those years in response to Russian pressure. Is Mr. Karnow so sure that were the situation reversed, the US would press for a return to the *status quo ante*, and that even were it to do so the Russians would prove to be as obliging as Eisenhower, Johnson and Nixon? Messrs. Ford and Kissinger give me, if not Mr. Karnow, strong reason to doubt it.

Abraham S. Haft, MD
Yonkers, New York

On Gun Control

To the editors:

Michael Roberts' "Guns and Bullets" (*TNR*, April 5) was slanted in favor of the abolitionists but (be thankful for small favors) not markedly. How quickly we forget the narrowness of our escape from what Watergate so nearly became! Or perhaps we simply failed to learn?

As a lifelong *TNR* reader, a liberal Democrat and a dedicated "big bore" target shooter, I would hope that you might undertake (in your editorial space) an exploration of this question: What do you think will happen—*really*—if the day ever comes in this country when "government and the police have all the guns"?

C. William Platt
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Kauffmann, *from page 20*

affluence he wants to keep working.) His boss and seven coworkers spend a summer afternoon with him, ministered to by a suave, incredibly decadent-looking manservant, played by François Simon, son of the famous Michel Simon.

The camera simply attends the party. In plot terms, nothing happens. There is a small outburst of anger at the end in which the host is accidentally knocked down and, distressed, asks his guests to leave. Otherwise: one man keeps telephoning his wife and reporting on what they have to eat and drink. A spinster gets the megrims, locks herself in a bathroom for a time, then suddenly reappears when they're about to break in. The office clown cuts up. The boss and an older woman employee arrange a rendezvous. The young girl in the group gets tight and semi-strips. The archconservative of the group storms at the decadence. Slight scuffle; the party winds down. The film ends back at the office, everything as was except that the girl who stripped has been replaced.

Nothing is wrong with this film except that not enough is right with it. If a film is just going to look at some lives, then the lives have to be interesting either in depth or novelty or both. At least some covered reticulation, of social or political or *any* kind of relevance, ought to be uncovered. All that we get here is the unsurprising—true but not with any unforeseen truth. Of *course* the clown goes too far and the girl gets drunk and strips, of *course* the party builds to a bit of noise and then goes into late-afternoon quiet. But out of all this "of courseness" comes no special penetration and very little pathos. So, for all the accurate acting and discreetly disposed directing, the focus shifts regrettably to Goretta himself. Instead of admiring what he has done, we feel that we are asked to admire his unbanal good taste in doing so little.

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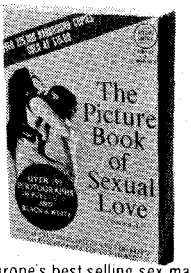

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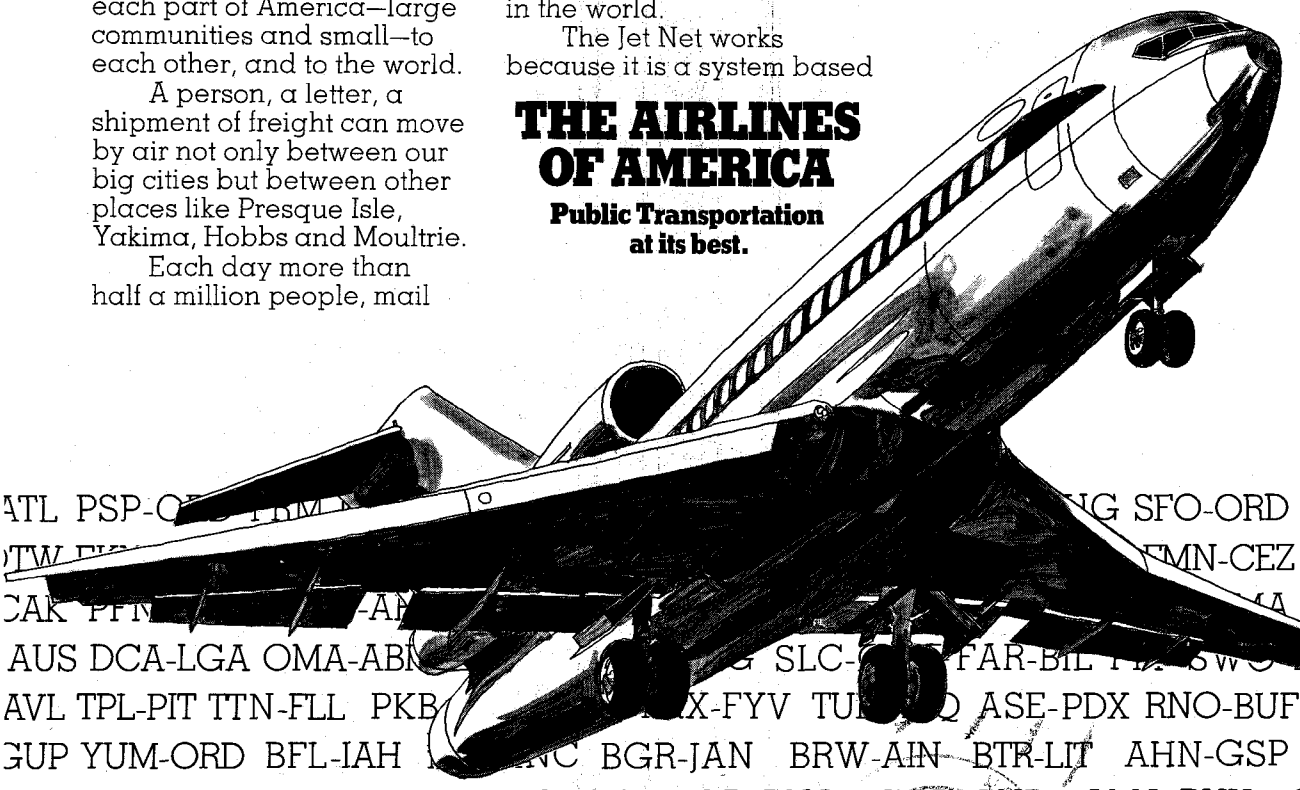

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